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The Voice of God in Us.*

A SERMON

PREACHED BY R. S. Storrs, D.D., IN CHURCH OF THE PILGRIMS, BROOKLYN.

THE words of the Scripture to which I shall invite your attention you will find in Acts x: 20:

Arise, therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

Doubting nothing! That is the secret of liberty, of efficiency, of success in every work which is undertaken by men: a confidence in the practicability, in the value of the work, in the Divine authority which imposes it upon us as an obligatory work, and in the Divine providence and power which will bring it to a successful performance. It is the secret of success, of enthusiasm in any secular enterprise. You see it in the inventor who is perfectly certain of the combination of instruments by which he is to accomplish a certain result—a result which is of value and importance to mankind. Nothing can hinder his endeavor, nothing can obscure or dampen his enthusiasm, because he is certain of ultimate success.

You see it in the teacher who knows that he has a truth to communicate to men, a truth which it is of importance to them to apprehend and to understand, who is not groping among uncertainties as he speaks it, who is not vaguely feeling after conjectures while he utters it, who is able to affirm it to others, because he has it affirmed in his own intelligent and intuitive spirit—the principle which he is declaring to the world. Kepler said, God has waited so many centuries for an observer of the heavens, I can wait for years for an interpreter of those observations. And every man who as certainly knew that he had apprehended truth and had it conveyed to others has been reinforced, inspired by this confidence, and gone to his work doubting nothing. See it in the soldier who knows, because he knows the commander, that the order which has been given is wise, practicable, needful; that no life will be

*Owing to lack of time we are compelled to print our report of this sermon without securing its revision by Dr. Storrs. The report, however, is made by Geo. E. Miles, reputed one of the best stenographers in New York.—ED.

wasted which can be saved, and no endeavor commanded which is not indispensable to the great result. See it in the sailor who trusts his clock and his compass, and is absolutely certain that the sun, of which he takes the meridian observation, will not tell him a lie, but will point out exactly the point on the ocean where the ship at that moment is; and he goes on his course, after his observation, doubting nothing, knowing where he is as exactly as if the commerce of nations had built at that very spot a beacon and had labelled it in immense letters of light in all the languages of the world: "This is at such a point on such a meridian." He knows as certainly as he could know then, when he has caught the ray of the sun upon his instrument, where he is on the ocean, which to others seems pathless and intricate. Everywhere, then, this confidence is the condition of enthusiasm and of success, and in Christian enterprises, precisely as in secular enterprises, it is a confidence not merely in the usefulness of the work, but in the Divine authority which connects itself with that work, and the Divine care and the Divine affection, the Divine impulse which attend us in our endeavors to perform it. It was precisely this, you observe, that Peter felt within himself when the messengers came to him from Cornelius the centurion. Except for the vision which had been given him, and out of which this confidence was flashed upon his spirit, except for the almost audible voice of the Spirit which accompanied and interpreted the vision to him, he would hardly have been ready to go upon this errand. The distance itself was something, between Cæsarea and Joppa. To be called by a Roman, and to answer that call, to a Jew like Peter was not in itself an agreeable thing. There was a vagueness in the errand which might have well stirred apprehension in his mind. The Roman centurion, whom he did not know, sending servants and soldier to him to come into his presence, and the mere separation from the duties which he was, day by day, accomplishing at Joppa, must have been itself objectionable to him, so that he unquestionably would have hesitated, very probably would have refused to go, except for the vision which had come to him beforehand preparing him to go, and for the voice which, as I said, had interpreted that vision to his mind. But, in consequence of this, he recognized the call which was made upon him by the servants and soldier sent by the centurion as the call of God. They were not bearing merely a message from the Roman officer: they were bearing a requirement from the Author of the world, from the King of the Church, from Him to whom Peter was supremely responsible and unto whom he had to render an account. And so the message in writing, if it were in writing, or as spoken, if thus it were spoken, was to him as real a message from the Most High as if it had been

articulated in public ; and he went, nothing doubting, and in consequence of his going the Church passed safely that first and greatest crisis in its history, the importance of which we scarcely recognize oftentimes—that crisis at which it was determined whether it was to be a mere sect of Jews, like the Sadducees or the Pharisees, or whether it was to be in its administration a world-wide kingdom for all mankind. Peter, chief of the apostles, Peter himself, thoroughly impregnated with the Jewish prejudice, taught by this vision, admonished by this voice of the Spirit, went and with the power which had been given to him opened the door of the Church for the first time to the entrance of a Roman ; and from that moment the door never has been shut. Peter himself doubted afterward, in the characteristic reaction of his impetuous spirit, whether the Jew could receive a Gentile and eat with him unless the Gentile submitted to the Mosaic ritual. But at this point he went, doubting nothing, and, by his action under the inspiration of God, made the world free to enter into the Church of Christ ; for if a Roman centurion could come—he who had been trained to war, he who was the official representative of the haughty and dominating empire, now crushed, he who represented the power that, by and by, was to sweep Jerusalem itself in blood and fire from the face of the earth—if *he* could enter the Church of Christ, then how much more the peasant, the herdsman on the hills of Galatia, or the merchant, or the teacher, or the scholar, or the women of Greek cities, of Thessalonica, of Athens, of Corinth ! Any one could come after the door had been opened wide enough to admit the entrance of this Roman officer.

There is not one of us in this house to-day on whom have come the blessings of the Gospel, who have received directly or indirectly the privilege and the Divine impulse, which come from the Church of Christ, who is not indebted to that instruction and impulse given Peter by the vision and voice. So he went, doubting nothing ; so he accomplished the errand, great, momentous and far-reaching in its effects, upon which he had been sent. There come often questions of duty to individual Christians or to churches now concerning which they wish that they, also, could have instruction like that which was given to the apostle—a vision in their sleep, a voice almost articulate and audible, of the Divine Spirit instructing them what to do. Work to which they appear sometimes to themselves to be called by God is difficult and dangerous and costly. There are arguments for it, there are arguments arising in their minds against it. The Christian conscience of those with whom they are most intimately associated is not wholly, definitely and decisively settled in regard to it ; and so they confuse themselves in perplexities of mind, judging of this argument

and that, balancing the reasons for and the reasons against, until, perhaps, the opportunity has passed away, and they cannot accomplish that which at the outset would have been easy to them. I suppose in our Christian experience we have met many such instances where we questioned and hesitated, consulted and argued concerning the question whether we were under obligations to accomplish a certain work or not, until the time for performing it had gone and we could not do it if we would. A thoughtful and sensitive Christian spirit will, therefore, desire intensely always—especially in such emergencies—some certain test, some sure criterion by which it may know whether God has appointed a work for it or not; and there are such. We do not see the visions in our sleep, we do not hear the articulating voice of the Spirit, but there are certain indications, when a work is appointed for us and it is our duty to take it up, which are as intelligible, which are to the thoughtful spirit as impressive as even a voice would be, for these indications still remain to us, and one or two of these I will bring to your thoughts this morning.

In the first place, a work identifies itself as probably a part of the plan of God which we are to accomplish. When it concerns His glory in the earth through the conversion and sanctification of the human soul, properly it is then connected with the plan of God, and the part of that plan which we are to accomplish, the opportunity being given. I do not mean to say that Christian duty in the world in respect of enterprise and of generous giving, of thoughtful consideration and of powerful pathos is restricted to those efforts which aim directly at the religious instruction and conversion of men; on the other hand, there are multitudes of interests in society which are, at least, subordinately and incidentally connected with this, but which seem to stand at quite a distance from it, concerning which also we are under continual obligation—not to our fellow-men merely, not to ourselves merely, but to God—to give them whatever of aid and furtherance it is possible for us to give. Enterprises that seek the intellectual culture of mankind, the founding of a library, the building up of schools and institutions of learning, the circulation of a true and enlightening literature; enterprises which seek to further the secular and social interests of the community; enterprises that concert for the public welfare in the matter of health, in the matter of public order, in the matter of just and liberal government; patriotic enterprises which seek to advance and establish the well-being of a nation—all these, and many others of a like nature, are as obligatory upon the Christian as a duty which immediately concerns the instruction of men in religious truth. Every stone in the wall has its office to accomplish. A man who is building a cathedral cannot say: "I

will make it all of statues. I will expend my whole strength and skill and resource on the spire, making it of the delicate gothic stone open-work that shall leap like a song into the sky." He must have the solid foundations at the base—underground. He must have the rough stone built up into the rocky wall, into the solid and sustaining buttress, into the tower that carries the spire lightly into the air, because itself must be solidly founded. Every institution that seeks the public welfare and seeks to promote intellectual culture, true knowledge among men, social interest, social attachment, patriotic interest and patriotic feeling, is thus fundamentally connected—as basis and part of the wall—with the religious endeavors which at last shall rest upon them all and be sustained by them. And, therefore, Christian duty is never narrow; it is as wide as the interest of man; it concerns his physical well-being as well as his spiritual; it concerns his social and intellectual advancement as well as his immediate connection of the spirit with God. But it concerns all these as connected with and tributary to those which are higher than us, for that is the spiritual plan of God in the earth to bring men into holiness, and happiness that springs from holiness, through fellowship with His own Spirit incorporated with His Son and revealed by His Holy Ghost. For that He preserved the race after it had fallen; for that He sent prophet and seer and songster; for that He sent His Son into the world that He might make men partakers of His holiness—not of an austere and rigorous morality merely, not of sentimental holiness merely—of His holiness, sweet and tender and mighty. That He might make men partakers of that holiness Christ came into the world, and for the same end the Spirit comes, and for the same end the Church exists. It is by that holiness that God holds the rocks in their consistency; it is this aim of transformation of man into the likeness of God that built the mountains, that hollowed the basins of the seas and keeps the ocean at its level. Everything terrestrial exists, with reference to that which is spiritual, immortal, in fellowship with the soul of God; so that by and by it may range the starry spheres in the likeness and the love, in the wisdom and the might of God, so that immortality shall open to it its gates of light and peace. This is the spiritual plan of God. When any work, then, contributes directly necessarily to that and is indispensable to the furtherance of that, when it meets us directly in our path, we may be inwardly persuaded—unless reasons to the contrary showing it not to be specially binding upon us are evident and unanswerable—that it is a part of the work which God assigns so us. Out of this comes missionary impulse, out of this came the apostolic order. Why was it, can anybody explain, that Peter should give himself to that work of toil, privation, peril, when every opportunity was open to him for a

life of ease and joy in the world? Why was it that he entered into this plan of God? He saw its greatness, and he saw the Divine glory in it, and therefore he says, "Christ leadeth me." The lifting of the world into the light of heaven and into the Divine peace—that was the impulse of apostolic activity—that has been the impulse of the Christian religion; and where that impulse naturally springs within us out of the Spirit of God, out of a plan proposed to us, it indicates that that is God's plan for us to realize.

But then, further than that, it must evidently be a plan that is possible to be realized by us, but possible to be realized with effort and self-denial on our part. We are not responsible for any work which we cannot accomplish; we are not responsible for preaching to the nations in their own tongues which we do not know, for inventing another gospel to be preached to the world for the glory of God, for building churches of brick and launching them from the piers and floating them over the seas to China and Japan. God holds no man responsible and no body of men for that which they cannot control; and if an angel were to come to me and say, "Create a new planet, create a new pebble, create a new grain of sand and so show God's glory forth," I should know that he was no Divine messenger, that he was a spirit of darkness and temptation veiling himself in the splendor and charm of an angel of light. God asks no man, no community to do anything which it cannot accomplish. The errand on which He sends it is always a practicable errand, provided there be a sincere desire on its part to accomplish the errand, to do the work; and in proportion to the effort demanded, to the self-denial required, His authorship of the message concerning the work becomes more evident to the thoughtful and reflective Christian mind. We usually judge in exactly the opposite way. We say, "That is a good work, and I can do it in a minute; therefore I will do it, that is God's errand for me. It is a good work, and I can help it by a little gift which I never shall miss. That is evidently God's plan for me." Thus we reason: ah! but God's plan exactly reverses that. He makes duty the more obligatory the more difficult it is, because for the development of Christian energy in us, Christian generosity, Christian patience, He gives us the work to be done by us. God can do His own work without us, and when one by one the great teachers of the Church have passed away, and the Christian Church tarrying behind has felt that the horsemen and chariots of Israel had gone from its sight forever and there was no more guardianship and no more inspiration, God has raised up others to take their places, or has carried on His work without such signal and illustrious spirits to be leaders in it, to show that He never depended upon any one human soul, upon any twenty, upon any million human souls

for the accomplishment of His plan. He carries them forward by His own might as the ocean carries the log—because of its own majesty and buoyancy. God does not need our help. Why then does He ask ask for it? Why put us to the trouble of working for Him, why put us to the strain of giving for Him, why put us to the long endurance of patiently planning and waiting that we may accomplish His design? Because thus He develops us. This is His spiritual university in the world. Thus He applies not tests merely, but incitements, stimulants, means of instruction, to whatever is best in us. The man who has given himself to his country loves it better, the man who has fought for his friend honors him more, the man who has labored for his community values more highly the interests he has sought to conserve. The man who has wrought and planned and endured for the accomplishment of God's plan in the world sees the greatness of it, the divinity and glory of it, and is himself more perfectly assimilated to it. And so it always is.

When the call for missionaries came to the New England Churches, during the time of their dense and hapless poverty, when the nation was poorer than it had ever been before since the Revolution, out of their poverty they answered. It was authenticated to them as the call of God, because the opportunity was great, the impulse urgent and the means small. The missionary departure would not have been so surely the plan of God, if it had waited for its birth until California had opened all her treasure, and Australia had plated the lands with gold, and Nevada had poured its silver as streams into all the courses and currents of commerce. Out of poverty God called men to sacrifices in His behalf, to great services in a great opportunity; and really if it had been written in the sky; if Paul, addressing an epistle to the Churches of the future, had stated it in his terse and effective terms; if John had seen it unfolded in the grand drama of the Apocalypse, it would not have been more evident that the call was from God than was made evident by the fact that it was a call for so great a work possible to be accomplished, but possible to be accomplished only by sacrifice and peril and prayer.

Again, it is an indication of God's plan that we participate in a particular work which He assigns us, when the call for it comes unexpectedly, not by pre-arrangement of ours, but in the development of agencies and energies which are outside of ourselves altogether. We recognize God's intervention in our plans, in part, by the suddenness with which the event occurred contrary to the expectation of those who had been looking for a different result—as when a friend is restored from a dangerous and critical sickness when all our hope had faded; as when a path is suddenly opened to prosperity and usefulness, where everything seemed hedged up and we, in our arrangements

could not contrive any way by which to reach the result; as when in a nation the whole fortune of the people changes in an hour, swinging from darkness into light, or from hope and triumph into despondency and gloom. We say the suddenness of change indicates a Providential force bringing that change to pass. We are right in saying it. We say the suddenness of the appearance of the angel to Abraham or Joshua, or to Peter in prison, was an evidence that it was not a human being who had walked up to the tent in company with others, or who in the night with the sword in his hand faced the Captain of the host; or who, working his way stealthily with little noise and yet with certain indications of his coming, which Peter might have heard, had passed one barrier, another barrier, crept through the gates, entered by the window, and at last had released Peter's limbs from the fetters. The suddenness was the signal of the angelic presence; and so, in every great work which He appoints in His Church, the summons comes suddenly on the part of God with every work which He would have His disciples take up and do in His name and for His glory; and if it has not been pre-arranged and our plans laid out with reference to it before, it is an indication that it is from Him.

You remember how it was when the Bible Society was formed in London in 1804. No man was expecting it. A poor Welch missionary had distributed in the mountainous districts of Wales some thousand copies of the Welch Scriptures. The supply was exhausted. He went to London to get more and could not. He said to one man and another man, "Why cannot we have a society to print the Bible in the Welch language?" They came together to see if it could be done, and one man, whose name had hardly ever been heard in the Church of Christ rose in his place and said: "Yes, that is right: that is reasonable. But if for the inhabitants of Wales, why not for all the world, a society to print the Scriptures, translated into the tongues of all mankind?" Sudden as a flash it came out of the clear sky. Instant was the response. Not more certain and instantaneous was the response, "**God wills it! God wills it!**" to Peter the Hermit when that public minister made the suggestion of the crusade. Out of that came the Bible Society of England, of America, of the world, whose power in the world, in the last three-quarters of a century, has been greater for its elevation than that of all the soldiers fighting their battles, the statesmen planning their policies or the diplomatists arranging international affairs. So suddenly and unexpectedly was it suggested that it was indicated as God's purpose by the suddenness. When a plan contemplates God's glory in the sanctification of men, proposes to us a work possible for us with effort and self-denial, comes to us without our provision or pre-arrangement, it is God's work.

Then, finally, when the impression is burned in upon the mind, day after day, week after week, an ever-deepening sense of duty concerning that work—that is God's voice, the voice of the Spirit to us. That was the way in which the Spirit wrought on the writers inspired to prepare a gospel of whose presence they themselves were sometimes not conscious. This silent influence of the Spirit was what wrought for us the New Testament, as it had wrought before the olden Scripture. This silent influence of the Spirit is the privilege of every Christian now. We may enter communion with God by our reception of and our obedience to this silent power within. Isaiah and John, Paul, Peter and the rest had no such exclusive privilege that the Christian cannot in part, at least, share, this day, entering into participation with God's mind through the silent indwelling of this Spirit in the heart. When the spirit of God filled the Holy of Holies with its glory, there was no beat of drum as the radiance showed forth and filled the room; there was no clamor of song running along the wall. It was light and noiseless as light, and illuminating as light. When God's Spirit dwells a Shekinah in the human soul there is no sound or rush of celestial beauty; there is light within, and that light is self-evident as coming from God. When that impression remains, deepening continually in you, becoming clearer and stronger, we must trust it as the discovery of God's mind to us concerning our duty. No man who has once learned to trust it will ever trust anything else in preference to it. In the great crisis of life that is always the way. Hold the mind prayerfully in conference with God, unresistingly under the impression of His Spirit. When it points in a certain direction, then follow it into darkness or day; wheresoever that leads, go. We are certain of success; go, nothing doubting. If it is God's will concerning us, then it is a work connected with His glory in the earth through the spiritual change and exalting of men, bringing them into unison with Him. It is a work possible with us, but involving self-denial and effort on our part. Then it is a work which comes without our pre-arrangement, and challenges acceptance as coming from God Himself. Then it is a work the impression of which will deepen in the Christian heart the more it contemplates it and the nearer it draws into sympathy with God Himself. When all those signs combine, then Peter may keep his vision and the voice of Zion which spoke in the air around him. I hear a voice within, and whosoever follows that voice follows God, and follows Him into His glory.

Oftentimes there are questions in the Christian heart which may be answered by precisely that course of thought we have considered this morning. When individuals come to me with questions of perplexity and doubt, always substantially the same

course of thought, which I now commend to you, I have commended to them. I have been led to consider the subject this morning, especially, because there comes before us, as a society and Church of Christ, a work of building a chapel for our mission, which is going to call upon the affection, upon the enthusiasm, upon the patient labor, upon the self-denying gifts of all of us, in order to its accomplishment. I wish you to observe that that is a work which concerns the glory of God in the conversion of men to Him, in their sanctification into His holiness and their participation in His immortality. You give to many other things, but to nothing else which so directly connects itself with the entire plan of God toward the world as that does. It is a work which is possible to us. It may take \$30,000. We know it is possible for us to raise that amount, and more than that, if we really feel the greatness of the work for which it is to be secured. We could raise that in a minute if it were to purchase exemption from a threatening plague in the air. We could raise that in a minute, here upon the spot, if it were necessary to keep back the ship of war of a hostile nation from the Narrows, which, passing into the Bay, would bombard these squares. We could raise that in a minute for any great work needed for our personal, secular interest. It is not a thing which is impossible to do. It is a thing which it may be difficult to do if we are languid, careless, if we do not recognize the great relations of the work, but as easy as breathing if we do. It is a work which is not pre-arranged by us; it comes to us in God's providence. He put the mission into our hands; He has united the minds of the committee to whom the matter was entrusted upon a proper place for it. The population around is swarming and multitudinous, of precisely the class we desire to reach and to bless. It is a work which has come as suddenly to us as that star came before the eye of the astronomer which blazed out a little while ago in the heavens as a new sun. It is a work the conviction of whose greatness, of whose infinite importance, of whose Divine authority has been deepening in every Christian heart that has looked at it, that has personally participated in it and wrought for it and prayed for it in all these months that are past. Now it comes before us. I trust, my friends, I am certain, we shall take it up, nothing doubting, knowing that if it is God's plan for us, as evidently it seems to be, then He will bring in visible forces, sudden but unexpected influences, to coöperate with us in it, until at last the head-stone is brought forth with shoutings and crying, "Grace, grace unto it!"

It is a thought with which I cannot but close, that he who has followed God's messages on earth has at last another message to follow, and according to the faithfulness with which he has heard and obeyed here, will be the confidence and glad-

ness with which he will follow the last. One messenger comes to us concerning whom there can be no mistake that he comes from God: it is the angel of death. One message comes in regard to which there can be no doubt that it is a Divine message, it is the message that we are to pass from this world to enter the unseen. I think when that message came to Peter he was glad to remember that when the word of the Lord had come to him in Joppa he had risen up and gone, nothing doubting. I think he was glad to remember that when the word came to go to Babylon he had risen up and followed, doubting nothing; and at last when the word came, "Come up hither!" he was ready to arise and follow, doubting nothing. God help us so to follow every voice of His providence which leads us to His service here that when the last voice comes, before which the human spirit naturally shrinks and sinks, we will rise up and follow, doubting nothing, and swiftly go up, clasping the hand of the angel until we clasp the hand of **Christ Himself!**

Concerning Jesus as a Poet.**A SERMON**

PREACHED BY **Thomas Armitage, D.D.**, IN THE FIFTH AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH, NEW YORK.

Consider the lilies of the field.—Matt. vi: 28.

PRINCIPAL SHAIRP, of the University of St. Andrews, says of the late Norman Macleod: "I never knew any one who contained in himself so large a mass of the pure ore of poetry. I have sometimes thought that he had imagination enough to have furnished forth half a dozen poets. Wordsworth's saying is well known •

'Oh, many are the poets that are sown
By nature, men endowed with highest gifts
The vision and the faculty divine,
Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse.'

If Wordsworth's words are, as I believe they are, true, then Norman was pre-eminently a poet. He had the innate power, but he wanted the outward accomplishment of verse."

The idea that the poetic spirit entered into Christ's nature, may at first appear crude, from the fact that He has left us no poem known as such. In framing other religions their authors have been laureates of hymn and music, story and song, according to the demands of human nature, so that the spirit of poetry breathes through them all. Persia, India and Africa have poured forth countless burning numbers in the service of the fire deity, Bramah and Mohammed. Strains, subduing and wild, have floated from men of genius to fan the fires of the altars and spread their systems to a glory for which their doctrines did not qualify them. As poetry is a classic of the heart, both in address and response, they have borrowed it for these uses; and it would be strange indeed if the doctrines of truth should not assume the same natural shape of parable and poem in winning the soul's affections for the God of truth. Hence, in exact harmony with this thought, Jehovah spake of old through the patriarchs and prophets by symbol, figure and measure, using all the minstrelsy of nature to stir the heart of man in praise. Can there be a deeper poem than that which awakened the solitudes of primeval space by the words: "Let there be light, and there was light?" Then the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy; and, from the beginning to the end of the Old Testament revelation, the flood of harmony comes pouring down upon us, mingling on its way the thunders of Sinai, the notes of Messianic song and the voice of prophetic hope, until the gospel itself is born to the chants of angelic choirs. As James Hamilton has beautifully said:

"Like as a skillful musician, called to execute alone some masterpiece, puts his lips by turns to the mournful flute, the shepherd's reed, the mirthful pipe and the war trumpet, so the Almighty God, to sound in our ears His eternal Word, has selected from old the instruments best suited to receive, successively, the breath of this Spirit." And, since Jesus was born, He has personally been the subject of the sublimest poetry which has flowed through the life of consecrated genius and humanity: as winds pass through the clouds making their vapors alive with motion, and then bend the tops of the mulberry-trees to the voice of their "going"; so humanity, for nearly one-score centuries, has been stirred in the poesy of its inward heart to the music of the child-born or the sobs of the man of sorrows!

In this respect the history of Christianity has been but a strife between men of power, eager to vie with each other, by the gorgeousness of conception, by the dreams of imagination, by the life of reality, by the adjuncts of beauty and by all the vibrations of harp and lute. In the most forceful expression of that true poesy which has crept over their souls under the spell of Jesus and His charmed name. A sublime and distinct inspiration has seized them and uttered itself through an intense eloquence, such as Homer and Virgil never commanded, because their very soul has melted in gratitude, as no soul can melt but that of a sinner saved by grace. Through hall and basilica, palace and cot, cathedral and mountain wild, cave and prison, *Te Deum* has never ceased to swell from softened hearts. The child of persecution and the conquering hero, bishop and king, queen and shepherdess, have sent forth strains of praise to Christ in every form of melody. In the East there is scarcely a rivulet which ripples in its lucid course through alpine gorges, hardly a leaf which flutters by the willow courses, or a beam which flies from the opening day, but has listened to the music of this voice. Children have danced to its flow in the streets of blood-stained Jerusalem; its measures have swept in triumph over Egypt's dark sea; by the rivers of Babylon its notes have quivered with delight; its cadences of love have sighed through the cedars of Lebanon, and round the hoary head of Sinai its chorus has gathered victorious over thunders and lightnings, the sound of a trumpet and the muttering voice of cursing words. When David's fingers touched his harp, music flew from its strings as if the angels of God spoke words concerning His coming Son; and since that great Son went back to the bosom of His Father and our Father, the freshness of everlasting love has embalmed His name in perpetual song. Pliny tells us that the primitive Christians met before dawn to sing praise to Christ, as God. Then came the confessors and martyrs who kindled the ardor of their re-

ligion by the poetry of His doctrine. And, since those days, the catacombs of the eternal city, the fastnesses of Switzerland, and the glens and mounts of old Scotia have been witnesses how the truth could give constitutional vigor and verse to the holy joys of man. A cloud of sweet singers in Israel skirts the historic sky of Christianity, embracing Clement and Ambrose, Bernard and Gregory, Hilary and Bede amongst the more venerable saints. Then follow in this line, Robert of France, Maria of Hungary, Henrietta of Brandenburg and Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, who made the battle-field, the castle and the royal home alive with poetic tributes to Christ, while modern familiarity readily suggests to us English-speaking Christians, Kerr and Keble, Byron and Bryant, Scott and Southey, Kirke White and Wordsworth, Milton and Heber, Cowper and Coleridge, Watts and Wesley, whose genius has sung His name. And, if all these, with multitudes of others in the old world and new, have offered their poetic contributions to Christ, would it not be passing strange if, after all, it should turn out that there is no poetry in Jesus Christ Himself? Surely, the seed-poetry which has yielded such a golden harvest must be found in Him.

That you may the better understand what is meant by this claim in behalf of Christ, it may be well to state the nature of true poetry. It has been said that reason speaks through prose, while poetry is the language of feeling. But, more correctly, true poetry lodges in the great thought which labors to make itself known by any form of words which may be in harmony with its greatness. The usual poetic form is in verse, or measure, with or without rhyme. But some of the highest and truest poetry in existence is found in the form of prose, because it cannot be crippled by the mechanism of language. Its life is not found in words, but in the copiousness of imagery and the warmth of sublimity, which seizes hope without precision, and endows forms of speech with autocratic license. Our claim for Jesus in everything which relates to the poetic spirit, and which accords to Him the dominion and place of the infinite Poet, is founded in the fact, that, in the grandeur of His conception, in the terribly sublime height of His moral sweep, and in the profundity of His expression, He is unequaled and inexhaustible. No such types of purity, delicacy and soul-life have fallen upon the ear of mortal as those of His unique inspirations. You find not their soul and substance in the dress which clothes them, but in their ideal and divine inwardness. They bring to your perception the hidden thoughts of the Divine mind, and the mysterious emotions of the Divine breast, as vividly as the painter brings his conceptions to your eye by colors. There is a sense in which stern human events, whether they take the shape of personal or

national struggles, even when downfall is their issue, convert themselves into real poetry, because they nourish its spirit and fire its animus. Heroic deeds become history and history flows into poetry. Such history has become the epic poem of all ages. And in the same sense, the person of Christ, His teachings, His truth, His acts and His life, have been the seed-poetry of the world ever since He was in it, and no supreme master-bard has sung for nineteen hundred years without singing Him. He became not only the divine mystery and the solemn wonder of the universe, not only the living poem of heaven and earth, but the one eternal Poet of both. Poetic virtue has gone out of Him, in the grand swell of His prose poetry, because He is a sort of star-capped Alp, at whose feet all human Rhines and Rhones are born. Christ is Himself the great poetic deep in which all truly poetic hearts heave, distinct as the billows. The wind, which howls through lofty crags, the thunder, which crashes through the riven skies, the sea, which groans in hidden gulfs, and the cataract, which hums nature's bass from its deep abyss, each has a rhythm of its own; and so Jesus, the poet-Priest, the poet-Prophet, the poet-Prince, is His own original. Other poets are true, forceful, fresh. But a Dante, a Milton, a Goethe are but rays from His star, while He is God and man, truth and force on fire; thought and feeling, life and words rolled together, like a quadruple star, never fully revealed, hence never exhausted.

Nothing more delights the true poet than to sing the praise of true poetry. Philip Sidney calls the poet "the monarch of all sciences," and he describes him as telling a tale "Which holdeth children from play, the old man from the chimney corner, and, pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue." Others love with great passion to depict the "muse" as soaring to her native skies on wings, throwing music from her merry heart as she goes; as a bright flame within the soul, a quenchless spirit which animates each life; or as an angel incarnated, rich in charms and beauteous in face, whose breast is a great deep in calmness, whose heart is an altar of warmth and whose eye softly melts in tearful love. Then, Butler says, "There is no art in the world so rich in terms as poetry," so that our Lord's words and thoughts must have been its very soul and body. Who, like Him, in a breath draws all natural and divine truth to a centre, and illuminates the deepest mystery with the grace of one word? In a far, deep voice, and through sentences of austere simplicity, His heavenly wisdom comes floating down to us like a disembodied lyric from the inner temple of God, both in the thought and heart world. Mary Magdalene might well have mistaken Him for the "gardener," leading her child-like soul through bowers of beauty, and classifying their flowers,

with a refining simpleness which yielded her the full luxury of fairness and fragrance. The eternal lyric and the mediatorial drama measured themselves in all His actions, thrilling His own bosom and those of mortal with strains which no other being ever rendered. His own soul, full with the fullness of Him that filleth all in all, and lucid as the very sea of glass itself; each sermon and parable that fell from His lips was but another and another overflow of infinite poesy,

Another thought. "The soul-moving poesy of Jesus is felt in its entire animus and outcome. You cannot fail to see His native greatness in the exuberance of image and expression by which the myriad-sided thoughts are set forth; but while this is entrancingly beautiful, it is but the casket and not the jewel. True; He presses into His service all forms of life, from the "salt" in the mineral kingdom and the "mustard seed" in the vegetable world, up through man and angel to the orbs of heaven and the elements of nature, as the "light" and the forces of growth, and each emblem is used in absolute perfection. Yet not one object is introduced for mere garniture. Each becomes an integral part of the solid, the elemental, the immovable. They palpitate with all that is indestructible in humanity, they tremble with instinct from the Divine mind, giving God and man in ideal, by all that is just and holy, by all that can subdue and lift up, by all that is free and unconventional, by all that is grand and sincere. The staple of all right poetry is found in the science of our Lord's teaching and person. There can be no real poetry without truth, purity, nature, fidelity and liberty. Falsehood, impurity, imitation, unfaithfulness and oppression, are not the materials out of which genuine poetry is created. Even to interweave these threads into its web is to prostitute the genius of good to evil, to enlist it in a hard and unnatural fight against its Creator, to make the sunbeam slap the sun in the face, or, as one puts it, to "profane the God-given strength and mar the lofty line." In ancient times the great mind of Baalam attempted this, seeking to compel his mighty inspiration to curse whom God had blessed. And when the blessing instead of the curse was extorted from him, it scorched his lips and blistered his tongue as with the poison of a curse. In modern times poor Shelly, prompted by some fatal, mental drug, suddenly blended a wild beauty with the strains of a parricidal abstraction, which cast the leer of discontent into the fountain of his own being, and left his lofty, proud melody full of misery, while it blanched his genius with failure to enlist and control for good the immortal aims of men. So, other gifted ones have attempted to fan the evil passions by chanting the praises of the sensual; and have brought a compensation to the divine art which has branded their own efforts with colossal failure. But the ani-

mus of Christ's poetic symbols and the sweep of their influence is not to stir a band of morbid passions, much less to evoke a troop of rhetorical ornaments, without substance or elevating design.

All the moral aims and ends of poetry are fully met in the hands of Jesus Christ. One never-failing element in the spirit of poetry is *the love of children*; in fact, without this beautiful trait no man can be a true poet, for want of love to children argues a degree of barbarity which is not consonant with the high refinements of a poetic nature. Hence, some of the sweetest sonnets which have ever stirred the human heart have been songs to childhood, though the bards who sung them were childless. This spirit moved our Lord's heart to its very depths, whenever a babe met His eye; and in the same moment that he rebuked His disciples for their coldness toward these little ones, He pressed them to His own heart for the double purpose of love and shelter. Mothers, by an instinctive love, brought their infants to Him wherever He went, "that He might put His hands on them," and bless them out of the fulness of His heart. His uniform simplicity of heart led them to invade Him for a benediction. He was an observer of their childish glee, games and amusements, when their little feet kept pace to the simple pipe; and He enlists their observation to rebuke the hard-heartedness of the times, saying: "Whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the markets calling unto their fellows and saying, We have piped to you and you have not danced." And not only had their baby grief attracted His notice, but He listened to their bursts of infant ovation to His royalty when they would have inaugurated Him monarch of Israel, singing, "Hosanna," and waving palms before Him. These acclaims from their sweet voices and hearts displeased His enemies. But He detected the noblest music in their notes and referred them to God, who perfects praise out of the mouths of babes. The most poetical of all skeptics says: "He lost no opportunity of repeating that little ones are sacred beings; that the kingdom of God belongs to children; that we must become children to enter there; that we ought to receive it as a child; that the Heavenly Father hides His secrets from the wise and reveals them to the little ones. The idea of disciples is in His mind almost synonymous with that of children. On one occasion, when He had one of the quarrels for precedence, which were not uncommon, Jesus took a little child, placed him in their midst and said to them: 'Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'" This part of His life is a poem of itself, and has been the seed-truth of thousands of poems.

Kindred to pure love for children in the poetic breast, is the feeling of *high and holy reverence for woman*. No true poet ever could sing praise to her degradation and infamy, but always to her honor, her virtue, her gentleness and her nobility. In isolated cases the contrary of this may be apparent; but there is this remarkable thing about such instances—namely, that the best and warmest friends of the poet invariably plead for him that he is misunderstood and misinterpreted, while they resent all loose applications of his effusions as base injustice. Now, the bare presentation of such apologies proves our position, that true poetry reverences true womanhood quite as much by compassionating the weak and fallen as by throwing guards around the purity of the pure. This our Redeemer perpetually did. Woman had never been treated under any religion or civilization as He treated her. Every word from His lips concerning her honored her, unmixed with a sneer or a reflection. Substantially, He took the ground that man cannot be happy if woman is miserable, nor holy if she is impure. He has no cheer if she is cheerless, nor comfort if she is comfortless. That man and woman must weep or rejoice, live or die, sink or swim together. No man ever revealed this mutual equality before. Plato, Aristotle, Lycurgus and even Moses, seem to have been strangers to the revelations of Jesus here. With the poet's eye and the philanthropist's heart He read the mystic tie between them at a glance and set about to strengthen its hold. His teaching carries the idea that man can never be free while she is a slave; can never be elevated while she is depressed; can never reach the full stature of manhood till she wins the high standard of womanhood. When she shall cease to be a drudge, a toy, a serf, then he will rise to be the king of creation and she will reign as queen at his side. Hence, He recognized them both as the noblest work of God, and set about redressing her wrongs, casting off the yoke which embittered her lot and throwing a hedge about her native dignity. In order to do this, He honored her with responsibility, and restored to her all her natural rights. He left it to her own election to be lifted out of the regions of sensualism, into which ages had sunk her, so that instead of being the victim of heartlessness she could choose to be the friend of man, the joyful mother of children, and the welcome daughter of the Most High God, making Jesus His only Son, her own elder Brother. Nay, more than this, if perchance she diverged from rectitude, He did not brand her with hopeless reprobation and cast her adrift as a worthless outcast, but met her with His noble forgiveness. To His generous heart, such an one was not a pitiless vagabond sent to wander to and fro in the earth till a merciful death ended her miseries. But she came and wept at His feet as if her heart would break; she

washed them with her penitent tears, stained them with her hot, choking breath, and kissed them with the grateful love of a hapless offender. But with a royal word He brushed away her shame; He lifted her up from herself and her sin, and sent her away freely forgiven, to become by a renewed life the future type of humanity and chastity. To finite reason all this is a dream, to legislation it is a license, to pride a condescension, and to rigorous Phariseeism a scandal; but to infinite love it is a privilege; to infinite benevolence it is a virtue, and to infinite poetry it is a God-like originality. The deep philosophy of humanity between man and woman was so hidden in its elemental life that no searching eye could have discovered it but His. And He only laid it bare in that scheme of boundless grace which draws harlots and publicans and thieves into the kingdom of God, while cold selfishness and equivocal piety and exasperated hypocrisy stand shivering without, repulsed at the door. This bold fact stands out as one of the loftiest headlands of history—namely, that Jesus was the first Great Teacher, who admitted woman to audience and discipleship in the school which He founded. In all religions her sex had separated her from her brother in teaching and privilege; and the fact, that He not only admitted but invited her into the inner temple, where there is neither male nor female in Christ Jesus, in order to instruct, purify and adorn her with the noblest character and fill her with the purest joy, opens up to half the race such opulent wealth as never could be wrapt up in any poem which man has written. Woman redeemed, is the poetry into which Jesus breathed immortal grace, immortal beauty and immortal life.

In all time, one of the charms of poetry has sprung from its tender sympathy with all that is winsome *in lowly life*, all that compassionates the sorrowing, and all that is brave in the self-sacrificing. True poetry cannot sing of wealth as wealth, or rank as rank. In themselves these are as sounding brass or glittering tinsel. They gain real consequence only as they are adorned by virtue, hallowed by tenderness and linked with chivalry. But when these grand qualities discover themselves in poverty, obscurity and oppression, so that they abound, despite every unfriendly and hampering influence, then and there, genuine poetry finds its hero and enshrines him with its halo of glory. There is little beauty in the open, smoking lamp. But place it within the alabaster vase, and then see how it lights up its soft, transparent purity. In itself the union of these is a silent eloquence. It is the unity between the grand and the humble, which challenges the poetic genius, to its brisk, awe-inspiring cadences, and makes the poet the scourge of courtier and sycophant, and the enthusiastic advocate of the unfortunate and oppressed. Such exposure of

pretence and imposition, and such fostering of honor and virtue, unconsciously incarnates reality in the rhetoric of vehement story, or flaming verse, or melting oratory. What more can genius need to captivate its powers? When the sun lights its own way to a new planet, it then will give it light. Thus; stirred, profound pathos and delicate sensitiveness, will pour out soul-melodies which move all hearts, as if the spirituality of Isaiah or the lament of Jeremiah were revived. But where have Milton or Lamartine, Byron or Scott drawn such a picture of humble humanity as the parable of the Wedding Feast? The great and mighty despise the generosity of the king, then the highways celebrate the feast. No strain has come quivering down through the heart of the ages like the ideal beatitude, "Happy the poor," and no life is so perfect a poem as that of the poet who uttered them. He had not where to lay His head, and yet enriched the whole world by carrying it in His heart. He could not consecrate the yoke of oppression, nor pour out the fires of His love to burnish the manacles of tyranny; rather He would melt them and let the oppressed go free, as the Bard of all that is divine in love and hope and truth.

Catholicity in its Relationship to Protestantism and Romanism.*

FIRST CONFERENCE.

CATHOLICITY A CONTINENT OF CERTAINTY: PROTESTANTISM AN OCEAN OF CONJECTURE.

DELIVERED BY THE **Rev. F. C. Ewer, S.T.D.**, IN NEWARK, N. J., AT THE REQUEST OF LEADING EPISCOPAL LAYMEN OF THAT CITY.

GENTLEMEN—The most solemn question a man can put to himself is, What is Truth? We are somewhere in a universe of complicated fact and intricate phenomena; but where? We exist now; but where along the flow of the eternal is that “now” set? In this universe, whose bounds we know not, complexity pervades every part; beginning within us, extending without us—beneath to the nadir, above to the zenith, and all around; complexity stretching away behind the farthest stars, coming up to us from an eternity behind, and going on to an eternity before us. God immanent throughout this vast and intricate scene, and all of its facts and phenomena moving with perfect harmony everywhere and forever, because guided by His single will. All, do I say? All but man and demons. Set in this scene, to act in discord with its laws and complex movement, is misery, disaster and death. To move in accordance with the All is peace, success, life. Now, to have the order of ideas within correspond with the order of fact and phenomena without is to have within us the Truth; this, therefore, is to have the means of life. To have the order of ideas within not correspond with the order of phenomena without—this is error, and acting on it is disaster, misery, death.

You have come up here not to consider the correspondence between the order of ideas within and the order of all fact and phenomena without. Scientific, political, financial, artistic fact and phenomena you care not for; for this world passeth away. No, the correspondence you wish is that between the order of ideas within and the order of those unseen facts and phenomena that lie beyond the limits of the natural and below the horizon of time. What is Truth there? Your question is a question, then, of life or death. Great God, it is no time for rhetoric. We have to live but once; we have to die but once. How shall we live right? How shall we die right? Once only can we shape our course for eternity. It is according to error or ac-

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according to truth. It is either to sail into correspondence everlasting with the complex facts and phenomena of the eternal and the supernatural, or to sail into a miserable discord with them; it is either, then, unto life, or unto that whose only fitting name is death. For an extraneous particle, caught in a vast machine, and out of harmony with its movements, is but crushed and ground by the resistless, ceaseless action of that in which it is set. God, time, eternity, and all that fills them—this is the vast machine in which you are set. You have come up here, therefore, to ask, What is Truth? to seek to bring the order of your ideas into correspondence with the order of supernatural fact and movement, external to yourselves, unalterable and eternal. But a question is “an hunger.” For who would ask for what he already has? Three hundred years ago Luther and Calvin announced that they had the Truth. But the stormy seas of private judgment and of human criticism upon which they launched it, and the detective solvents of inexorable logic which they challenged, have been too much for it. Calvin cannot answer Channing; Channing cannot answer Parker; Parker cannot answer Frothingham. Lapsing time, too, hath brought its strain upon it; lapsing time, which is the Divine criticism on all systems, hath confronted it with unexpected situations, hath stretched it upon new problems for which in its human infirmity it had not foreprovided; and, lo! it is rent and gone to pieces. After 300 years you behold it a miserable raft, its fragments floating apart like the mere flying rack of the heavens. And you behold poor remnants only of the great nations clinging to its parted and broken logs, and earnest thinking men at their wits’ end to know what is Truth. It is a question of the preservation of Christianity on earth.

Let me pause here a moment. How is it that I am summoned here by citizens of widely variant views? What has happened in the last ten years? The world does not stop. Truth may be drowned by the cries of ridicule; but the hearts of the silent people who are watching it are ever loyal to it, even in its degradation on Calvary; and there is no device yet discovered that shall transubstantiate, in their eyes, either ridicule or prejudice into argument. In 1868 the solemn Indictment against Protestantism, drawn up in the fear of God and in behalf of dying souls, and uttered from Christ Church, Murray Hill, was met not by argument, but only by a gale of holy malediction and impotent scorn. But those who felt with the penman of that Indictment have bided their time. For there is no device yet discovered that can prolong the life of an excitement and save it from sinking into a calm when the quiet voice of argument shall again be heard. I look around, and, lo, ten years have wrought a change. In St. Louis, in Wis

consin, East and West, the challenge to Protestantism is taken up again and begins to swell. And here in 1878 I call you to mark the pregnant fact, that as that Indictment was not in a single instance answered in 1868, so it has not been answered since. And here, as a priest of God Almighty's Catholic Church, I call again from these steps of His holy Altar for an answer to that Indictment, if it can be given.

If any one claims again that steamboats and cotton mills are Protestantism, one can only say that again the claim calls for no notice. Protestantism a failure? Why, look at your lucifer matches, your locomotives and suspension bridges! And one, gazing with sad eye upon the five points of Calvinism, upon the Lutheran dogma of justification by faith, upon the rule of private Scriptural interpretation, upon absolute predestination, effectual grace, final perseverance and infant damnation, looked away from Protestantism as he was bidden, and observed the patent reapers and sewing machines, and failed to see the connection. No one ever charged the inventive faculty of man with being a failure when acting in the natural realm. It was the inventive faculty of fallible man operating in the supernatural realm, and substituting there a human for a Divine contrivance of salvation that had failed.

To say nothing of the specifications in those eight discourses, what were two of the main counts in the Indictment? First, that whereas, 250 years ago, the Protestant religious dogmas held captive to themselves great thoughtful peoples of the Germanic, the Swiss and the Anglo-Saxon man, those dogmas had failed to retain the hold they once had, and have, to an overwhelming extent, lost at last the intellect of those peoples; and that, while 250 years ago Protestantism held the masses as well as the intellect of those peoples, it has failed to hold and has lost those masses as well as the intellect; that Protestantism, as a form of Christianity, stands to-day breast-deep in torrents of skepticism which itself hath let loose, which are deepening around it, and in which it is drowning; and that it stands there to-day aghast and incompetent. This was one count in the Indictment. Gentlemen, you have seen that it has not been denied. A second count was that the fundamental religious premises of Protestantism were essentially anti-Christian, and must end, by inexorable logic, in infidel conclusions; that if Calvin's and Luther's and Zwingli's premises were to be accepted, then Channing's conclusions were nearer right by logic than Cromwell's, and Theodore Parker's nearer right than Channing's, and Frothingham's and Adler's the rightest of all, and quite unanswerable by a Protestant; that when the Calvinists burned Servetus at the stake, they burned Calvin's own brain-child. It was claimed that if this logical aspect of Protestantism was correct, it ought to have shown itself finally in

practical historical results. And the charge was made that what thus ought to have followed logically, had actually followed historically, and was patent to all in the comparatively empty churches and the widespread skepticism of thoughtful Germany, America and Switzerland. This was another count.

I reiterate: with all that was said ten years ago on the subject, in sermon, newspaper and magazine, not then did any one, not at any time since has any one come candidly up and grappled with these two main counts in the Indictment. Can they be met and answered? If so, why have several editions of the volume containing the Indictment been allowed to be read openly or secretly (for the volume was forthwith placed on the Index Expurgatorius of Protestantism) and to work like leaven in the community for ten years? If they cannot be answered, it is not strange that earnest-minded citizens should arise and ask, What is Truth?

To resume; those who say to the world, "We have the eternal truth," speak, of course, with authority; and that authority must be one of two things, either baseless or founded on a rock. Protestantism cried, "We have the Truth," and nations listened. What strange thing do you at once behold as the nations clustered to the chair of Protestantism? I will tell you. The tones of Protestantism to the world were the tones of authority. It summoned the people to itself to instruct them. And yet it asserts its own fallibility. Every religion which does not claim at least for itself infallibility convicts itself by that fact that it is liable to lead men astray in that solemn concern which, fixed but once, knows no cure. Behold, then, this amazing event—the dying nations flying for the eternal truth to a system that proclaims its liability to plunge them into error. For such a system to teach in the name of a God, whose truth is one, fixed and eternal, and whose ways alter not, nor conflict with each other, is the consummation of the absurd. No, gentlemen, as Jesus Christ was the only human being who dared to call himself God, so Catholicity is the only Christian body that dares to call itself infallible; that dares to begin its discourses, to give its truth, to pronounce its judgments and to pardon sin, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." The Sovereign Lord God hath Himself prepared a remedy for Protestantism; and that remedy is the anarchy with which it rends its own domain in a sublime suicide. And so it lies writhing under the human and dying under the Divine criticism.

Out of the sixteenth century, then, there sounded the cry, "We have the Truth." We have listened to that cry and have seen what has come of it. It was a cry of mere human voices.

On the 18th of July, 1870, that cry sounded again to the

world. It arose, not from the plains of Saxony, not from the lakes of Switzerland, but from beneath the shadow of the Apennines. This time it was in the singular number: "I alone have the Truth." All mankind are bid to note that an august Prelate, when speaking from his throne as doctor, and instructing the world in faith or morals, is infallible. But, nevertheless, gentlemen, you have heard that second cry, and have turned your ear away from the Vatican. And do I do other than speak your thoughts aloud when I give the reason why?

If we are to yield our own ideas and accept, without arguing, what is told us as the truth, we must first of all be convinced that we have reached the fountain from which only eternal truth flows. In short, reason is truly called by Catholicity "the prelude of faith." Why, then, is it that since the 18th of July, 1870, we are all to believe that the Pope is infallible? Prior to that date the world did not believe it; voices which spoke from high places in even the Roman Catholic hierarchy itself "had declared that this doctrine of Papal Infallibility was not and could not become an article of Catholic faith. Not only had the once powerful school of Gallican divines emphatically repudiated it; not only had Roman Catholic bishops and clergy in Ireland, not very many years back, put on formal record their denial of it; not only had such an approved manual as Keenan's Controversial Catechism declared it to be no article of Catholic belief, and affirmed that no Papal decision could bind, under pain of heresy, unless received and prescribed by the teaching body of the Church; but many European bishops had, in recent times, distinctly denied it to be a part of Catholic doctrine, and American bishops, just before the Council and during the Council, had expressed their conviction that it was out of harmony with both Scripture and tradition, and that it contradicted the history of the Church as a teaching power."

And yet on and after the 18th day of July, 1870, we are told that the 170,000,000 of Roman Catholics accepted the Papal Infallibility. Something must then have happened on that 18th day of July eight years ago as a reason why the world is called on to believe the Pope to be infallible. What happened? A solemn dogmatic decree was promulgated. That was all. Who promulgated it? It was the Pope himself, the Patriarchal Council approving. Ah, then the decree rests upon two supports, the Pope and the Council. Let us examine each support. And first the Council. The Council, as one of the supports of the decree, was either fallible or infallible. If it was fallible, then, for all we know, it may have made a mistake when it announced the Papal infallibility. But if, on the other hand, it was infallible, then, by asserting something else and not itself to be infallible, it has infallibly pronounced its own fallibility. Indeed, the decree itself declares the Council to be falli-

ble; for it says: "The definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of themselves, *and not in virtue of the consent of the Church*, ir-reformable." If, then, the Council, by its own admission and by the Pope's assertion, is liable to error, we have no guarantee whatever that it spoke the truth when it taught that the Pope was infallible. Thus, either way, one of the two supports on which the decree rests—namely, the Patriarchal Council—proves utterly rotten and worthless.

Reason is the prelude of faith. Let us pass, then, to the other support on which the decree rests—namely, the assertion of the Pope himself. Prior to the 18th day of July, 1870, the question to be decided was whether or not the Pope was infallible. On the 18th day of July the Pope himself settles the doubtful question. How? Why, by simply declaring that he is infallible. Is this logic? "I am infallible." Why? "Because I am infallible." Behold here, gentlemen, born in the womb of an occasion most illustrious, and issuing from a gathering which, for stateliness, robed splendor and solemnity, has rarely had its equal, this flagrant instance of the fallacy known as "Begging the very question at issue"; an instance which is perhaps the sublimest in its presumption and the most absurd in its simplicity that the world ever stood amazed at.

There are people in this world thoughtless and discourteous enough to say that the feminine mind has some peculiar notions of its own touching logic; that if you ask why a certain thing is so, a reason, entirely satisfactory at any rate to itself, is, "Because." One is reminded, *mutatis mutandis*, of what the able critic of *The Church Times* said of Cardinal Manning. One "does not know whether such ungallant suggestion be well founded or not in the case of women; probably not. But it applies with singular force" to the promulgator of the above decree.

What connection there may be between the angry portents of heaven and the deeds of man in the moral and intellectual realms, who shall say? That the former are rolled out of the physical realm coincidently with the occurrence of the latter in the moral realm by that God Who holdeth and guideth both realms as one by His one will and power, may be too much for science to fathom, but not too much for faith to receive. At any rate we know what God hath said: "And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars; . . . for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." At any rate you have seen Melchior, Gasper and Balthasar guided to the spot where the young Child lay; and, at any rate, we know that darkness came at noon-day, while the Jews were accomplishing their purpose.

When, on the 18th day of July, 1870, the aged man, crowned with the tiara, arose with great form and pomp from his throne

in the Vatican Basilica, and made the awful declaration to the universe, "I alone have the Truth," above the dome of that Basilica without there had already gathered out of the reservoirs of the air a storm, which those who saw it describe as almost unequaled in blackness and turmoil and terror. And as the poor, feeble human voice lifted itself from earth it spoke into the deepest gloom, and was instantly answered from heaven by angry flashes of the most blinding lightning and peal on peal of sudden thunder, as though in a Divine derision to drown the Pontiff's awful words.

From the University of Wittenberg and from the lake-shores of Geneva and Zurich we heard the cry, "We have the Truth." But it was only the cry of human voices, claiming no infallibility. Again from the banks of the Tiber it arose, "I have the Truth." But it was again the sound of a poor human voice only; a voice claiming indeed infallibility, but the claim based on supports both of which crumble to dust at the touch. And so you have turned your ear away from the Vatican.

But a question is not only "an hunger," it is also "a hope." For who would ask for what he despairs of ever having? And so you have come up here with the great question on your lips. Have you seriously asked yourselves why you have come up here? Is it—since you cannot rely upon having the truth from Rome, from Geneva, from Wittenberg—in order to sit at the feet of another mere man and be instructed in new dogmas of grace, justification and salvation, which he, too, has excogitated and deems correct? No, gentlemen, you have not placed me in so absurd an attitude. You announce that you have already had enough of the mere fallible human voice crying to you, "Put your trust in me."

There is a second explanation, then, of your presence here; and does this account for it? Having, namely, in your minds the various statements touching grace, justification, the atonement and salvation, which men have propounded as the Truth, do you come here for still another theory, an articulated, dogmatic statement, in order that you may sit as judges, weighing the new with the old, and decide which is the most Biblical and probable, or select parts from all and form another theory to suit yourselves and perhaps to announce to the world? But this would be merely using me for new material, and then falling back on yourselves for the Truth; while there is that within you which, in its hunger cries, I have not the Truth to give, nor power to summon it forth, nor reagents to test it. No, gentlemen, in coming up here, as you have not placed me in a mortifying position, neither have you placed yourselves in so absurd an attitude.

There is only one more explanation. You will neither trust me nor yourselves. Ah, then, gentlemen, you seek no less than

the Divine voice to give you the Truth. But do you expect to hear the Divine voice speaking the Truth to you through me to-night? No. For we accept the Divine voice without arguing; and you have come here to consider, to weigh, to reason. To consider what? Reason is the prelude of faith; and you have come up here to reason within yourselves and to consider whether there be anywhere on earth any channel of the Divine voice, any audible source of infallible Truth, and if so, where you are to find it. For such and such only will neither deceive nor fail you; with such and such only will you be satisfied; before the presence of such and such only will you be at rest. Then, having accepted without arguing, the Truth from a source that will not deceive us, we may afterward reverently examine and admire its pearls and rubies, and compare them with the diamonds of glass and the emeralds of paste.

If there be on earth the audible Divine voice, where shall we go to find and listen to it? This is the question of to-night. It is very difficult to disengage one's self from the influences of education and from long habits of thought. Ideas and prejudices which we have gained in our childhood, youth and early manhood from our parents, from the Bible, from the atmosphere of Christianity around us, root themselves into us until they become almost a part of the very fabric of our minds. And yet I am going to ask you to join with me in the difficult task of utterly disengaging yourselves for a brief while from all notions of religion, from all impressions of every name and nature touching even God, which you have had all your lives, and touching the future life, revelation, Christ or salvation. I ask you provisionally to wipe them all out. They may all return upon you when I have gotten through; but for the nonce let us put them all away in order that we may come with virgin minds to a certain pathway where I wish to take you. In that one pathway at least we wish no disturbing elements, no shadowy forms of previous notions and prejudices beckoning us hither and yon, as we cautiously move on. Then we shall be all alike as we enter. It is a pathway of very simple reasoning; and I beg each one of you to examine carefully every single link in the chain from first to last.

Why is it necessary for me to ask you away from all your previous impressions into this pathway at all? It is because we are, with our different educations and religious influences, all in confusion; and I desire that we go back and start even, and all over again, without a Bible, without a Christ, without a Church, without Sacraments, without any religious notions—and see where we shall come out. It will at least be interesting, and an amusement, to try the experiment, even though nothing else come of it.

Let me say, in the first place, then, that as we stand surround-

ed by the innumerable sects and forms of Christianity, the plain man is utterly bewildered with the conflicting voices. He thinks there are a thousand and one questions which he must carefully and painfully settle if he would get out of the maze and reach the truth. No, gentlemen, this is a mistake. Numerous as the forms of Christianity are, and certainly their name is legion, they fall as inevitably and infallibly apart into classes, orders, genera and species, as do the innumerable flowers of the vegetable kingdom. Settle three questions and your trouble is gone. The first two are not difficult or complex questions either. And it is up to them that I would bring you face to face to-night.

Now all chains of reasoning must hang upon staples. It is impossible to conceive of a chain of reasoning extending back infinitely into the past and hanging nowhere. In mathematics, reasoning starts from axioms. I start then with certain axioms, which I ask you to admit without proof. I ask you to admit : (1) That there is a God ; (2) That that God is a perfect God of love ; (3) That we each of us exist ; and (4) That our senses give us tolerably accurate intelligence of that by which we are surrounded. Bear in mind, gentlemen, that we all admit that God is a perfect God of love ; for that is of importance. Indeed, Voltaire himself once said, that even if there was no God, it would be necessary to invent one. If you do not admit this, then I have nothing further to say. If you do admit it, then I go on ; and let us see where we shall come out. I do not ask any of you to take a single step where you cannot follow ; but having taken any step, I simply ask you, in this course of Conferences, not to go back.

We all start even, and therefore I will take some one of us, not as a guide, but as a specimen for each of the rest ; and let that one be myself.

I exist, then. And looking round about me, I find myself in a vast temple. Above me is its mighty dome ; spread out beneath me is its vast floor. It is the Temple of Nature. How did I get here ? (Remember, we have wiped out all our previous religious impressions.) How did I get here ? I know not. I only know that I entered it through the gateway of birth, and that I shall go out of it through the gateway of death. Within this Temple of Nature I find innumerable objects and physical, mental and moral laws operating. I can observe and group its facts, form theories, test my theories by experiment, ascertain its laws, and come to fixed and certain conclusions, in which I can rest and on which I can act. For I have senses which place me in connection with all around me, and enable me to be intelligent concerning the abode within which I am enclosed. I know that I shall exist here but a few years, and then

I shall go out of this temple through the doorway of death. Whither shall I go? I cannot see beyond, and I do not know. I can follow a fellow-man up to death, but the moment he has passed away my faintest whisper, my loudest cry does not reach him. He is gone from me as completely as though he had been suddenly annihilated. I stand and rap at the door of death; what is there beyond? I listen; there is no reply. Is there an existence beyond and outside of this Temple of Nature? If so, will my existence be eternal or not? Are there rocks and dangers there for me to escape? What are the beings that live in the realm of super-nature? Are there invisible facts and phenomena and laws that prevail here in the super-natural? I know not. How then am I to know the Truth with regard to them that I may so shape my course here as to enter upon a successful existence there? I know not. I am completely cut off from them by the walls of nature. I cannot see them through those walls; I cannot hear their sound and movement. If I form theories about them, I cannot bring those theories to the test of experiment; and so I am totally cut off from ascertaining whether my theories are true or not. How then am I to act here with certainty? Standing at the door of death, I can, indeed, conjecture concerning those facts, phenomena, laws and requirements in which I may be living now and into which I am to plunge; I can conjecture about all unseen supernatural; about the law of the forgiveness of sins, and justification, and the means of salvation. And so, too, can another man conjecture. And his mere guess, though it contradict mine in every particular, is as good as mine, for both our guesses are mere guesses, and are really worth, so far as certainty is concerned, just nothing at all. Why sow seed in cloud-land? Why waste time? Let me turn back then from the door at which I am standing to this Temple of Nature, where there is something positive; where, if I form a natural theory, I can test it by natural fact and come to some settled and positive conclusion. As for supernatural fact and law and process, we, shut up as we are in this Temple of Nature, are all by nature drowning in an ocean of mere fruitless conjecture and guesswork.

And yet, if I am to live eternally in the realms of the supernatural and among its phenomena and laws, if its laws play here unknown to and unseen by me, and have a bearing upon me, then, that I should have no guesswork, that I should be able to bring the order of my ideas within into harmony with the order of those supernatural facts, phenomena and laws, that I should have no less than the positive and infallible truth concerning them, this, to me, is of the vastest importance. It were the most exquisite cruelty to shut me in here and leave me drowning in an ocean of mere conjecture about

eternity and its laws and requirements. My danger of unending disaster is enormous; for truth is one, like the centre of a circle, while the possibility of variation from it and of error is infinite like the radii that point in every direction. This, then, is my situation by nature.

Now, just here, gentlemen, I call you to take the first step along the pathway with me. It is this: God is love; I have admitted that. Therefore there is no escape from the logical conclusion that He *cannot* leave me in my miserable plight of fruitless guesswork. He cannot leave me in my awful position of drowning in an ocean of mere conjecture and incertitude about topics concerning which it is of the vastest importance that I should have knowledge no less than exactly true, for anything short of infallibility itself in the matter leaves me still in uncertainty and danger. I can run no risk whatever where the stake is so fearful, because eternal. God is love; and the first conclusion is, He must and has done something to help me. And, furthermore, it must be that in helping me He will do so effectually, *i. e.*, He will make no mistake. He is not going to attempt to help me and cheat me by leaving me worse off than before. For He is perfect and knows what the real help will be, and all-powerful and able therefore to effect it, or He is not God at all. Being God, then, and infinite love, He must, can and has helped me, and has somehow helped me effectually.

Is there any flaw in this first link? I cannot see any; and I seem to hear you say, "No; go on."

Very well—the next point is *how* has He helped me? Gentlemen, there are only three ways possible and only three ways thinkable. One is so to place me that I can help myself; the second is to allow some one else to help me; the third is to help me Himself. If He has not done the first, then He must have done one of the other two. If He has not done the second, then there is no escape for me; for He must have done the third.

First: He could take me temporarily out of this Temple of Nature, give me such new senses as would put me *en rapport* with the invisible facts and phenomena of grace and the supernatural, leave me to ascertain of myself its laws just as I ascertain here the laws of nature; and then, when I am equipped with the knowledge of the truth, put me back into this temple and leave me here to live aright and to die aright. But I know He has not done this. Therefore He must have adopted one of the two other only thinkable ways. If, then, He has not enabled me to help myself, He must, secondly, have sent some one else to help me; or, thirdly, He must have helped me by breaking through the dome of nature, coming in to me Himself, and so placing Himself *en rapport* with me as to communicate with me intelligibly to myself.

Here, then, our pathway forks. And here at this point you are face to face with your first great question. How will you decide it? Which way will you take as you go on? To the left or straight ahead? If you decide that He sent some one else, you are a Unitarian. If you decide that He came Himself, you are a Trinitarian.

But I am not here addressing Unitarians. I am addressing those whose God is not the god of Cicero and of Mohammed. It was long since decided and admirably set forth by the great French Dominican that there are only three possible religions, viz.: one whose postulate is, "Man is God"; a second whose postulate is, "God is God"; and a third whose postulate is, "God is Man." The first is the religion of Polytheism; the second is the religion of Mohammedanism; the third is Christianity. Christianity declares that God has become Man, and so communicates with us directly. Mohammedanism says this is impossible; God remains and is only God, and His communication with man is only through a prophet—through a second cause, through a creature. This also is the fundamental postulate of Unitarianism; therefore Unitarianism is a European variety of the second form of religion, or Mohammedanism, agreeing with it in its mighty fundamental postulate, "God is God," but simply varying that mighty statement into "Allah il Allah, and Christ is His prophet." But I am addressing, I say, those whose God is the God of St. John, of St. Augustine, of Luther, of Cranmer and of Wesley. It is unnecessary, therefore, for me to enter fully into the question whether, in helping us, God sent some one else. It is only necessary to say that if He sent some one else, then He has made the mistake of attempting to help us out of our conjectures, and failing to do so. For it is a patent fact that the Unitarians are left conjecturing as to what is Truth? and what is God? and what are His ways? and what is Christ? as badly as ever. Semi-Arians against the Arians, Arians against the Socinians, Channing against Parker, Bellows against Frothingham. As, therefore, on the theory that some one else was sent, we are plunged into the absurdity of supposing that an all-powerful and all-perfect God of Love tried and failed to help us, that a perfect God is, therefore, imperfect, and a loving God either incompetent or unloving, we are forced to reject the second of the three ways of helping us.

There is but one more thinkable way. He must, then, have adopted that. There is no escape for us; we must move straight along our path with the settled and permanent conclusion that God broke through the dome of nature and came in among us Himself.

I am not only driven helplessly to this conclusion, gentlemen, by logic, by the absolute necessities of my case and by

the attributes of God, but I am confirmed in it, moreover, by the fact that here before me, in this very Temple of Nature, there is an extraordinary book, which, whatever I may say of it, I know as a historic fact, foretold long before the extraordinary Being came whom they call the God-man, that, sooner or later, no less than God should come, as the desire of all nations, and be "with us," that He should be born of a virgin and that His name should be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

It must be God, too, for I must have nothing less than certainty as to supernatural truth and the laws of His Grace. And certainty demands infallibility. All creatures, even the highest, are finite; they fall short of omniscience itself. For if the being be less than omniscient he may innocently lead me astray through ignorance. I am driven helplessly to admit, then, that God has come to help us.

I pass on, then; but, lo, I come suddenly to a spot where the path forks again. We must pause again. Gentlemen, you are brought here face to face with your second great question. For God, having once come in a visible form, having so come that He can be touched by us, and can speak to us audibly through an organic form of human matter, one of two things must have happened subsequently. There are only two things possible to have happened; only two things thinkable. They are these, namely: He must either have so gone away again as not afterward to be visible, tangible and audible through a one organic form of humanity on earth, or He must have remained with us, visible, tangible and audible through a one organic form of humanity on earth. There is no *tertium quid*. There is your second great question. If you decide for the first alternative, then you are a Protestant. If you decide for the second, that God has still remained, and will to the end of time remain, in a one, undying, ever-fresh, amazing, organic, visible, audible, tangible and recognizable body of human matter, known as the Body Mystical of God on earth, out into which His Body Natural has without break or fissure expanded, then you are a Catholic. Whether you are of the Anglican, Roman or Greek part is a subsequent question; but you are a Catholic.

What is the relationship, then, between Protestantism and Catholicity? As we stand here where the path forks a second time, shall we take off to the left into the Protestant by-path, or shall we go straight on? Let us see.

"Oh, yes," says Protestantism; "God came 1,800 years ago to place Himself physically *en rapport* with us; He stayed thirty-three years; and then He went away, and is no longer on earth, visible and tangible in any one organic speaking body of human matter. But when He thus went away He left behind Him, for our certainty in matters of doctrinal truth, grace

and salvation, a Book. Behold this our sublime Bible. It is with this that we are *en rapport* since He left; and then He sends His influence from heaven, which in some recondite, spiritual and transcendental sense, helps each of us to find the truth as we apply ourselves to this, His precious legacy."

Certainly, I reply, this is an intelligible theory, and commands my respect. But I am to decide which way I am to go. Permit me to ask of you, then, What is the supernatural truth touching punishment hereafter? "Some of us who accept the 'Bible only,' claim that it is eternal, and others hold that it is not." Touching the necessity of Baptism and the Sacraments generally? "Some of us hold that they are necessary, and others that they are quite unnecessary." Touching the number of the Sacraments? "Well, some of us claim that they are ordinances only, and not Sacraments at all; so that some claim that out of the seven there are only two, and others that there are none at all." Touching the atoning Cross? "Some of us claim that Its effect was universal; others that Its effect was particular only." But, touching Its necessity for salvation at all? "Well, some of us that accept the 'Bible only' claim that It is necessary, and others that It is not." Touching the necessity of a good life? "Well, there are some that claim it to be necessary to have wrought at least one hour, from the eleventh to the twelfth, for the penny of eternal life; others that the work of salvation is all completed if one, as the clock of life is striking twelve, utters the all-powerful and magical sentence 'I apprehend the Cross.'" Touching hereafter? "Some claim that there is only an eternal Heaven and an eternal Hell; others that besides these there is an intermediate temporal state of waiting; and still others, there is no Hell at all." Touching Satan? "Some of us think there is such a being, others deny it." Touching God Himself? "Well, we are not agreed; some of us that accept the 'Bible only' hold that God is a Trinity; others that The Father alone is God,' and so on to the end of the chapter.

But if God came and thus went away and left only a Book and a vague influence, I do not see, O Protestantism, that we are very much helped. I do not see that we are not all still drowning in an ocean of mere conjecture as to what that Book says. I do not see that we are not all left still conjecturing touching the mightiest and most vastly important facts, phenomena and laws of grace and salvation. God, who He is; man, and what his state is; hereafter, here, and the supernatural generally, Nay, your Book, with which alone you say you have been left, hath only stimulated conjecture concerning these things a thousand-fold. Before, we knew it was all guess-work; now you are all busy at guesswork, and do not realize it. This is the worst of all. For before, we faced conjecture,

and knew what we faced—it was conjecture, unreliable, unverifiable. Now you face mere conjecture, and are all and severally cheating yourselves into thinking each his own is not conjecture at all.

By your theory, O Protestantism, a loving God flew to a world that was drowning in an ocean of conjecture, gave it a great hope of rescue, and then fled, leaving that behind Him which only hurled them back into a vaster, blacker and more tempestuous ocean of conjecture than ever. By your theory, O Protestantism, a loving God has done Satan's work! By your theory an omnipotent God has risen from His Throne to strive to do a work, and could not! By your theory an all-wise and perfect God has devised and executed a plan, which has miserably failed amid the laughter of Hell! Your recon-dite, spiritual, transcendental, vague influence from Heaven, to guide you into certain Truth—what has come of it?

I love you, O my relatives! I respect your sacred memories, O my forefathers! but your Protestant bypath, and the dark and inextricable swamps into which it leads—it is no way for me to tread. I must bid you farewell and go on to the uplands of Truth. Venerable is the past; but venerable are not its errors. They tell us that mediævalism is dead beyond resurrection. So it is. But the sixteenth century is just as dead, too. Begone, sheeted and stinking corpse! The nineteenth century hath come. We will live with the living, and not in tombs.

Gentlemen, I have led you up to the presence of your second great question. It was this: God, having come in a visible form, must have done one of two only things: either have departed or remained; and remained, too, not in the vague, spiritual, transcendental sense of a mere impalpable influence—for that we see is practically to have departed—but remained in a real, tangible, visible and organic form, through which He can and does speak audibly to the world. These are the only thinkable alternatives. If He departed and left a book only, then we are Protestants. If He remained, "God with us," then we are Catholics. But we cannot adopt this position that He departed bodily without being driven by logic to deny our axiom that God is a perfect, all-powerful and loving God; without being driven to the position that He is a God who strove to do what He could not; a God devising a plan that failed; a God wishing to help us, but powerless; a loving God giving us a hope, but cheating us, and leaving us worse off than before. We are driven helplessly, then, on to the other alternative, namely, that having come in a speaking body of human matter, He remains in a speaking body, an organic form of human matter. And we find this one organic form, the human part of the God-man to-day on earth, in His Body Mystical,

out into which His Body Natural of Palestine has, **without** break or fissure, gradually expanded over the earth, as human beings, plucked like branches from the root of the first Adam, have, out of all generations, been grafted into unity with It by Baptism, and as His one Body and Blood, passing through the Eucharist equally into all the branches, have incorporated them into Himself.

He is still the God-man on earth. He perpetually incarnates Himself. He is still "with us," taking human nature to Himself and abiding in a one visible Form of matter. That Form is the Catholic Church. It is not a mere society of men; it is the one organic Body Mystical of Christ. By It and through It and Its marvelous arms and limbs, He literally touches us that His graces may flow through His touch. In It as Its living soul, and through It, He speaks to us audibly, that we may be certified we have the truth.

We are not cheated. We still have, by logic, by the necessities of our case, by the sanction of the Divine attributes, and in actual, historic and present existence, the Omniscient God on earth, remaining among us, according to the promise He made at a moment when, otherwise, we would have thought He was departing—"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." In Him, in this God embodied in the one Church, in this God continuously visible and audible, therefore, behold, gentlemen, the Fountain of infallibility which you seek; for God Himself cannot err nor falsify. And as the one Holy Catholic Church in all Its parts, His own body, raises Its voice and chants in unison round and round the world, in unbroken strain, following the tireless sun through the centuries and the millenniums, the solemn Catholic Creed of Nice, Constantinople, and Athanasius, listen: it is the voice of God on earth, Who chanted the great prophetic psalm, "Deus, Deus," from the Cross, chanting aloud that all the peoples in all time may hear, and be without excuse, the unaltering, irreformable Truth.

SECOND CONFERENCE.

CATHOLICITY A LIFE AND AN ORGANIZER; PROTESTANTISM A DISORGANIZER AND A DEATH.

GENTLEMEN—St. Thomas, of Aquinas, defines life as a spontaneous motion. It is something more than this. It is a mysterious principle pervading the universe, which possesses a centralizing force. It organizes and harmonizes. It sustains in existence the organic form which it has constructed. It is the mother of order and beauty. It builds the crystalline forms with their glittering angles; it works out for itself, and then produces the rustic tracery of the tree; it frames and holds together the bird, the beast and man; it constructs the family, the State, the Church; its fountain is God, and its sanction is, "Thou shalt do no murder." On the other hand, death is a disorganizer. It is a despoiler of beauty. On its anvil it smites the diamond into powder; it lays the tree low; it slays bird and beast and man; it sends hate, divorce and orphanage into the family, feuds into the State, schism into the Church; its fountain is in hell, and its fiat is: "That which is shall not be; that which is gathering into unity shall be scattered into severalty; that which is organizing shall be decomposed." Life, then, is the love of beauty and of order; death their foe and destroyer.

It is my privilege, gentlemen, at this conference to present Catholicity to you as a life and as an organizer; and it will follow that the fountain whence She springs is God, and not Satan.

What was it that this life, issuing from the bosom of God, went forth to organize and to compact? What was it that was to be gathered together out of its severalty into unity? It was the human race; which, when it fell away from God, went into pieces and lay upon earth disintegrated and dying. It fell from Him Who was not only the life, but Who was also love. Cut off from Charity, therefore, selfishness, hates, envies and angers were the mutually repellant force in its bosom, sundering its individuals apart from each other, its families and its States.

The life which we call Catholicity goes forth into these ruins as an organizing and integrating force to build a structure of order and beauty. What was its cohesive operation as it thus went forth; and what the marvelous structure it erects and sustains? It formed an organism in which are four great couplings or unifications. The first of these unifications had, indeed, existed in the eternity of the past—namely, the unity

of the Father and the Son in the archetypal, interior structure of God; the second and the third of the great couplings take place during the scene of time present; in order to carry the fourth, final and permanent unity, namely, of human beings with Christ, through the eternity of the future. Go back with me, then, to the first, and behold this living force of Catholicity going forth to its great integrating, organizing and centralizing work among the poor fragments with which it has to deal. Behold the unifications which it successively effects as it proceeds in its benign work.

1st. From all past eternity the Father and the Son in God have been of One Substance. If the Father is God, the Son is God of God; if the Father is Light, the Son is Light out of Light; and as the Father is Life, the Son is Life of Life: *i. e.*, life flows out of the Father, Who is its fountain in God, and so fills the Son that the Son can come to the earth with the great statement, "I am the Life." Here, then, we have the first unification; in God from all past eternity the Father and the Son are One. It is in the Trinity and the entire unity of Its Persons that we have the hope and the prophecy of human reintegration. For, secondly, God the Son descended into the Temple of Nature, took manhood to Himself in the womb of the Virgin, was born and stood among us the God-man. Here we have the second great unification effected; Christ's Manhood, namely, so entirely one with His Godhead that the life, which from all past eternity He had from the Father, now flowed from His Godhead into and filled His Manhood.

3d. The third great unity in the successive steps was the oneness between Christ's Man's Nature and His Church. A union, as we saw at our last conference, without break or fissure between them. Indeed, Scripture exhausts all metaphor in the effort to make us realize the consummate integrity of this third great unification. The oneness of man and wife, though they be declared by God to be one only flesh, is not sufficient. The oneness of the head and human body, though "from the head all the body is by joints and bands knit together," is not sufficient. If we are the branches, He is not the stock, but the whole vine. Indeed, the Church is so one with Him that it is called by His name, Jesus Christ.

4th. There is but one more unification, the fourth, which completes the vast constructive work. In it the poor broken fragments are reintegrated into this structure, organized, harmonized and sustained: namely, the unity effected by the Holy Ghost in Baptism between each separated individual of the race and this one Catholic Church.

Behold, then, gentlemen, the kindly, loving, reconstructive force of Catholic life at its work, gathering poor disintegrated humanity, one by one, through the fourth unification into one-

ness with its one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church—which was already one with the Manhood of Christ; which Manhood was, through the second unification, already one with the Godhead of Christ; which Godhead, through the first unification, was always one with God the Father in the eternity of the past. Behold how life, flowing with a unity of purpose through these living links, binds all together—Christians, Church, Christ and the Father, Who is the Fountain of Life—into a unique and sublime structure, and carries reintegrated humanity out of time present to sustain it in God through the eternity of the future. Behold, too, in all this, how the one Holy Catholic Church and Its Baptismal Sacrament are inseparable, indispensable and undying elements in the whole grand organism of life and unity. “Thou shalt not commit murder” is the sanction of the sacredness and pricelessness of that one visible Apostolic Church, and of its blessed life-giving Sacraments. To slay the Godhead of Christ and the Trinity and the Incarnation with the Arians, Socinus and Priestly; to slay the Church with Protestantism; to slay the Sacraments with Simeon and Chillingworth, is to break in upon this structure of unity and to slay God’s plan of salvation.

But, gentlemen, in all this, what have I been giving you? I have simply been giving you that plan of salvation, that Gospel in little, that solemn creed of Nice, Constantinople and Athanasius, which the three Communions, Anglican, Roman and Greek, of the One Catholic Church, which the three national types of Catholic man, Saxon, Latin and Oriental, hold in common and chant ceaselessly to the peoples as the sun goes round the world through the centuries; the Christian Creed, which that one tripartite Holy Catholic Church alone, too, holds. For Protestantism, which is the disintegrating, destructive, disorganizing and scattering element in Christianity, does not and cannot hold that Creed, or proclaim it to the nations. Do you ask why? Two reasons. Following its death-giving instincts, it rends that Creed apart, disintegrating it article from article, and then cheats the world by declaring of each and every separate article, “I believe it.” But the Creed, like all of Catholicity’s works, is organic and a unit; it is built up, a thing of life like a flower; article grows out of previous article, and opens out into the following, so that its articles cannot thus be sundered from each other or rearranged, any more than a flower can be torn apart, petal from petal, and sepal from stamen, and pistil from ovary, and remain a flower. Though you may have in your hand afterward all its parts, you have not the flower. For this holy and unalterable Creed of Catholicity expresses something as a whole over and above the sense of its separate articles, which is the very thing, the very Gospel, the very plan of salvation Protestantism will not admit, hates, and with mur-

derous instinct would slay. It makes necessary the four great unifications, and among them, as a part of the plan of salvation, the one great Catholic Church in its Saxon, Oriental and Latin sides; its Apostolic ministry, and its Sacrificial, Sacramental and Sacramental systems. Secondly: but I hear you say, gentlemen, surely Protestantism asserts that it believes in a Catholic Church. True; but what does it mean? It means, and it means avowedly, merely some vague, disintegrated nebula of all tolerably good folk, baptized and unbaptized, for it includes the Quakers and others. Nebula, do I say? A nebula is something we can see, at least with a telescope, and map out in its general shape, however hazy. But this indiscriminate muster of Protestantism retires when we look at it into the complete indistinctness and incertitude of a profound and permanent invisibility. Gentlemen, this is not the organic Catholic Church of the Creed. This is not to believe the Creed, but to believe something else of Protestantism's own invention. To believe the Creed is to believe what that Creed was written to mean, and what it always has meant from time immemorial. But to excogitate out of the profound depths of ingenuity a totally new and modern idea, and to cover that totally different and antagonistic idea with the garment of an ancient phrase, and then send the new idea forth, a mere wolf in sheep's clothing, is to act the part of the disingenuous, and to do the work of him whom the Saviour called "the liar from the beginning and the father of lies." The phrase "Holy Catholic Church" is a cover of definite shape that will fit only one receptacle, and it cannot be made by any manipulation to hold under itself and within its rims the innumerable suppositions of Protestantism sprawling off hither and yon at their own wild will. The lineaments of death and disorganization are unmistakable when brought side by side into contrast with the fair, fresh beauty of a life that organizes, harmonizes and sustains

But life is not only an organizing and uniting force, it is also, as St. Thomas says, a spontaneous motion. Now "all motion" (I quote from another) "bears in its very essence the idea of a starting point, of a point to be reached, and of an effort to pass from the one to the other." If, then, Catholicity be a life and not a destroyer, if its fountain be in God and not in hell, then, as such life, it must exhibit not only this constructive force which I have shown, but also this element of motion and these peculiarities of motion—namely, a starting point, a point to be reached, and a flowing from the one to the other.

High up in far-away mountains there is a vast reservoir of water. From the end of that great lake its floods tumble in white cataract into a basin on a lower level, and form there a second enormous reservoir. From the opposite end of this second lake the waters tumble again into a third basin on a

still lower level. From the opposite end of this third basin they fall again into a fourth lake still further below. From the lower end of this fourth sheet of water they issue in innumerable radiating rills and streams over the level lowlands, filling them with verdure, with beauty and with fruits. You have here in these four lakes, one below the other, and the luxuriant plain spread out at their foot, an apt illustration of life and grace issuing as a motion from God the Father, and reaching at last by Mediation the lowlands of poor humanity, to turn them from a desert into a garden. Life and grace, which we all need in place of death and weakness, issue from God the Father, their original Fountain, and fall first into God the Son. They next fall into the Man's Nature of Jesus Christ. From this they descended on Pentecost into the great lake of the Catholic Church, filling its enormous basin; whence they issue finally and flow through the openings of the Sacraments into the many stream beds of human lives, and fill the world with the flowers of sanctity and the fruits of good works. God the Father is the starting point of this life. God the Son in His Catholic Church and through Its Sacraments is the mediatory receptacle from Whom this overflowing life and grace reach humanity which is the term of all.

In our last conference I conducted you up to Jesus Christ in His visible Catholic Church as its soul and life. It was here that you found, embodied on earth, Him who is Infallibility itself, because He is God. It is through this, His one visible, organic Body Mystical, inseparable from Himself, unless indeed you slay the God-man now on earth, that you heard Him chanting continuously the unalterable and irreformable truth. And that in which He chants aloud this truth to all the nations is the Catholic creed. What, then, is the creed? What is the infallible truth? In what I have said above, I repeat, I have been giving you simply that Catholic creed. For the creed is nothing less and nothing more than a history of the course which life and grace take from stage to stage, as they issue from God the Father, and passing through the Godhead, and the Body Natural and Mystical of the Son, reach at last through Baptism human beings that need them. The creed is the Gospel in little; the good news unto men; the way of salvation. For the creed begins with: "*I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible.*" It begins then with the Father as the Fountain of all things; the Fountain, therefore, of the life and grace which we need after the fall. But it is the history, not of all things, but simply of the course of that grace. It passes next, therefore, and announces the reservoir into which life and grace first flow from the Father: "*And in one Lord Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God;*" and it announces

the first unification; that, namely, between Father and Son, existing in the eternity of the past: "*Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God; Light of Light; very God of very God; Begotten, not made; Being of one substance with the Father; By Whom all things were made.*"

It then gives the next reservoir into which the life and grace flow and announces the second great unification—namely, God and man in Christ—"*Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man.*" But human nature, before it could, even as it stood on earth in the person of Christ, receive and be filled with the very fullness of life and grace, must first undergo, even in Christ, a time of probation, of temptation, of trial. There are profound reasons for this, almost if not quite beyond the grasp of human ken, but which God Himself displays in furtive flashes out of that sublime passage beginning, "For it became Him for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings," and ending with, "For in that He, Himself, hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." The Creed, therefore, goes on to give the process by which the Man's Nature of Christ was prepared through "*sufferings, crucifixion under Pontius Pilate, death and burial, to rise again the third day, and to ascend,*" not astronomically, but to ascend in the *highest moral and spiritual elevation, even into the condition and lofty spiritual companionship of the Most High*, "to receive there," in that moral and spiritual exaltation, "the gifts for men," and on Pentecost to pour those gifts forth from His Body Natural which had thus gained them, and fill with them His Body Mystical, the Church. Hence the Creed goes on to say, "*I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father, and*" not from the Father only, but also from "*the Son; and I believe in the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.*"

Here we strike the third great unification—the oneness, nay, the identity of the Church with the Man's Nature of Christ, even as it said, "The Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all;" and as it said again, "Ye are the Body of Christ and members in particular." Let us pause here a moment before we go on to the conclusion of the Creed.

You will remember that at the close of our last conference we were left forced into a certain conclusion. We were forced by logic, by the necessities of our case and by the attributes of God Himself, into the conclusion that God, having descended visibly into the Temple of Nature, having so come that He could touch and be touched by us, and that He could speak

to us audibly through an organic form of human matter, must have remained with us in a one visible form of human matter. This kind of remaining only, we found, would be an effectual relief. The other only thinkable suppositions left us worse off than ever. Besides, why should one small country, one brief generation, thus have the inestimable boon of His presence *en rapport* with itself, and not all nations and all subsequent time as well? Let us take up this subject, then, where we left it at the last conference, particularly as it relates to the spot in the creed at which we have arrived.

We having been forced into the conclusion that God must remain on earth *en rapport* with us, the problem here is, How was He thus to remain in a one organic body of human matter; a continuous body, too, that should be His own Body, still surrounding His Soul and Divinity, and in unbroken unity with Them? There are many reasons why, if the first or natural form of His Body had continued visible among us, it would not have satisfied the requirements of our case. For that first form and condition of His visible Body was local; it could stand on only one contracted spot, while we need Him simultaneously in all nations, all round the world, in a Body that shall speak to us, forgive us our sins, touch us and feed us. To that first condition of His visible Body, which we call the Body Natural, a few thousand only could have clustered at one time; while we all, and all round the world, need to gather simultaneously to "God with us," at any time and at all times. The overwhelming majority of the human race, moreover, are sons of toil and could not have traveled to Him. Besides, there were something shocking in the supposition of that fair form upon whose bosom St. John leaned, continuing visible for centuries, descending to the wrinkled brow and thin silver locks of extreme old age, and lasting undying beyond even that in a decrepitude of millenniums which we know nothing of. This were the extreme of the unnatural. God never acts in a shocking or unnatural way; and such act were beneath the dignity of God. And yet logic, our necessities and the attributes of God have driven us to the only conclusion that God must remain on earth in His one organic Body; that He must so remain as not to shock us; that He must so remain that His Body shall be, however aged, yet ever fresh and youthful; ever one, yet everywhere simultaneously present throughout the world. Mighty problem! Who shall solve it? Not you, gentlemen, nor I, nor the wisest philosopher that ever lived. But what is thus beyond human ingenuity—what is quite impossible to men—is easy to God. For there are natural laws of growth and expansion, and there are supernatural laws of growth and expansion. The Divine voice had said in the ancient time that "The stone cut out without hands," the

Human, visible Nature of Christ, should "grow and become a great mountain and fill the whole earth." And the Divine ingenuity, in the fullness of time, found out a way by which His Body Natural could expand without break or fissure into His Body Mystical, the Catholic Church, and fill the whole earth. The Natural and the Mystical forms of His Body of human matter are but two consecutive visible conditions of that Body; the one local, the other universal; its natural condition disappearing on Olivet, only that the Mystical condition might thenceforward alone be visible and tangible on earth. Natural bodies expand from infancy to childhood, to youth, to manhood, by natural law; God's Human Body then continued ceaselessly to expand, but by supernatural law. Besides, at the very time when we would have supposed that, on Olivet, He was departing out of his condition of visibility among us, He took occasion solemnly to disabuse us of this error; to disclose to us that He was not; to say to us, "Lo, I am still with you, even unto the end of the world." Of course He had always been with us in His impalpable omnipresence. If He had meant to say that He would merely continue thus to be invisibly and inaudibly with us, a mere influence, He would have been uttering a needless truism. Nay, it was no such truism that He was guilty of. But what He impressed upon us was that as He had been *en rapport* with us, so He would continue to be until the end. The event at Olivet was a disappearance of the first and temporary condition of His visibility to make way for the second and lasting condition. He that first took our human nature, binding it to Himself in the womb of the Virgin, goes on taking our human nature to Himself till the number of the elect is made up. The Incarnation is a perpetual fact. What is the supernatural law, then, under which His own Personal Body continues to expand? It is this: human beings are baptized into Christ, according as it is said, "We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones." Human beings, sprouting like so many separate branches from the poisoned root of Adam, are plucked thence by the Holy Ghost, and in Baptism grafted into the new tree, Christ, our bodies into His, our souls into His, our hopes, our imaginations, our passions, our reason into His; and so the Tree enlarges; so His Body visible expands; so "the Stone grows and becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth;" according as it is said, "Ye are the Body of Christ and members in particular." Branch after branch being thus grafted into the Vine, Christ then sends forth through the Eucharist His one Body and Blood into all the branches simultaneously, and binds them up together into His own visible Catholic Body; according as it is said, "For we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." And so, since the Resurrection and until the end of time, it is life

that still playeth in His Body on earth. The Catholic life is among us; the life that centralizes, organizes, integrates, harmonizes, beautifies, builds and sustains that Body. No, no; death, that disorganizes, loosens and scatters, hath no part in It. It hath overcome death; and, lo, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against It."

Life is not only thus, gentlemen, the love of order, and of organism, and of unity, but it is also the love of freshness and of beauty. God Himself, who is the Life, must by the laws of His Being finish His works. He must adorn the meadows with flowers, the streams with rocks and cascades, the lakes with green islands, each billow with a white blossom atop, and the very night with diamonds. And life from God could not enter into and play within the great Catholic Body, without its breaking forth also, not only into the beauty of meekness and of purity and of all sanctity, but also into the wonders of fair religious statuary, paintings, architecture and music, the robed procession, the incense, the banner, the fringed canopy, the brilliant altar, and the fair pomp and form. It was that whose other name is Death, the destroyer, the foe of organism, of freshness and of beauty, that smote all this in the sixteenth century, and tramples the flowers to-day as the fecund life sends them forth once more to clothe the wide waste of desolation.

Here, then, we have, gentlemen, the infallible God in a Body on earth, even in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, as its soul. And because we say of a man that we see him when we look at his form, though his soul be invisible, so we all around the world, as they in Palestine, have the Infallible God still visible, tangible and audible among us; we see Him, we touch Him with reverent hand.

Now, His Body of human matter having thus grown out by supernatural law into so marvelous and everywhere present a structure, it follows, if He is to continue to apply Himself to the world through It, as He did in Palestine through His Natural Body, that It must have everywhere new and marvelous limbs and organs which He may stretch forth to poor humanity, and by which He may touch us, and teach us, and pardon us, and feed us. In Palestine, with the limbs of His Body Natural, He tenderly touched the white eye-balls of the blind and the silent ear-chambers of the deaf. He laid His loving hands on children, on the sick, on the sinner, and on bread and wine, that pardon, and blessing, and transformation, and all gifts and graces might flow from Him through His Body, and through even His garments, to those that were touched. What, then, are the new and marvelous limbs of this His marvelous supernatural Body? They are the Catholic, life-giving, grace-conferring Sacraments and ministry. These are but

limbs of His Personal Body Mystical which He stretches forth to us, by which He touches us, and conveys to us His grace all round the world. A hand and arm separated from a living human body is but a piece of powerless clay. But slip the arm into its socket in the living body, and the soul within, using that poor piece of clay, performs with it its own mighty deeds. So a man separated from Christ's Body Mystical—a man considered merely in himself alone—is the very type of powerlessness. But when set in a socket of Christ's Mystical Body as a Priest or a Bishop, the God within that Body, using the poor frame of clay as His own arm and hand, performs with it His divine and mighty deeds among us, pardons in the Sacrament of penitence, transforms bread and wine at the Altar, blesses, regenerates in Baptism, anoints with the Holy Ghost in Confirmation, makes of twain one flesh, confers the grace of Orders through His touch, and either raises the sick from death or sends the soul healed into eternity. The Sacraments and the Ministry are His limbs with which He touches us. Tactual succession? Why, of course "God is with us" in a Body and literally touches us. When His arm and hand, a Priest, baptises an infant, it is not a man that is baptising, or mere water that we are looking at; we are looking at Christ's own arm and hand stretched forth and visibly taking one dear one and grafting it into Himself; at the holy Altar we see in the human Priest God's visible hand touch and bless the bread before our eyes and convey it to us; when one is confirmed or ordained to the Priesthood we are literally beholding Christ stretching forth His marvelous hand, a Bishop, and conveying the Holy Ghost either to the work of the ordinary Christian or to the work of the Priesthood. And it is He that at last takes our poor soulless body and, in the requiem, lays it tenderly away till He shall summon it to the resurrection. Beware; he that hath eyes to see let him see. The quickening touch of God's body on earth? Ah, gentlemen, as true are the words of Manning, as they are consummately beautiful: "When the Wisdom of God came into the world, He laid His hands upon a multitude of things; upon the sick, the afflicted, the hungry, the dying; upon little children, upon the bread He blessed and brake in the wilderness; upon sorrow and upon pain; and, lastly, He laid them upon the Cross; and wherever He laid His hands He left a sweetness and a fragrance which wisdom can perceive and wisdom alone can know." Look, gentlemen, at your Protestantism. O Protestantism, in thine unwisdom thou wilt drag the world, and even the little ones of thy bosom, away from the touch of Christ.

Here, then, stands the Catholic Church with continuous life from the first; here It stands all round the world. In It is God, for It is His personal body; through It He applies Him-

self by Ministry and Sacraments to poor humanity; to It He made the solemn promise that He would guide It, when It spoke as a unit, into all truth; not that It could possibly speak error any more than could His Body Natural in Palestine, It being the organ of His soul and Divinity; but He made the solemn promise in kindly and descending consideration to our weakness. If He promised to guide It, when It spoke as a unit, into all truth, how can any one suppose it to be fallible and liable to lead us into error without charging Christ with breaking His promise, and so not being God at all? Thus it is always that the Protestant denial of the infallibility of the Catholic Church is a first fatal step in that inevitable logical descent which ends in denying the Godhead of Christ and setting up Unitarianism, with its murder of the Atonement in the world.

What, then, has the Catholic Church, as a unit, spoken? What is the infallible Truth? It is the creed which I have given you. This is all that it has formally announced by its six general councils. This is the antagonist of Protestantism, since life is always the antagonist of death. But, besides the formal statements of the creed, there are other things which we know to be true also; not because the whole Church Catholic hath formalized them in general council and accepted them as thus formalized, but because the Church's documentary voice has always, and in all Its three parts, everywhere declared them, and would have thrown them into formulæ had it been necessary, viz., the Sacerdotal and Sacramental systems, the Apostolic succession, Priestly absolution, the real objective presence of Christ in the Eucharist, Baptismal regeneration, Prayers for the dead, and lights, incense, vestments, adoration and song as the five essentials of Christian worship. Of these all, every part of the Catholic Church, ancient, mediæval and modern, Latin, Saxon and Oriental, Anglican, Roman and Greek have held no doubt, but have continuously and consentingly asserted them in ritual and official documents. The points on which the Anglican, Greek and Roman Communions differ are points over and above these; points upon which the whole Church has not yet spoken.

Let us return and go on with the Creed. After making its great announcement, "*I believe in the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church,*" it proceeds to announce the fourth and final great unification in the reconstructing work that Life is effecting—namely, "*I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.*" And then comes the grand close. For, of course, there follows from the internal life action of this great organic Catholic Structure, "*The communion of all the saints*" within it. Furthermore, as death is only by sin, there follows from the cure of sin the cure of death. The

Creed's next article is, therefore, "*I look for the resurrection of the dead.*" What, finally, is the end and purport of all this flow of grace and life, and of all these four unifications? What is the final result of all this integrating, organizing, centralizing, harmonizing and sustaining force of Catholic life as it goes forth from God to broken humanity? It is salvation. Therefore the Creed rounds out and completes its history with the final statement, "*And the life everlasting in the world to come. Amen.*" Thus is the Creed a consecutive history of Life as a motion, of Life as a reintegrator, organizer, harmonizer and sustainer—of Catholic Life, the foe of death, with which the race was struck at the Fall.

In the wonderful land of the West there are two processes going on simultaneously; the one on the lowlands, the other on the uplands. In the serene and sunny valleys of Sonoma and Suisun, of Santa Clara, Los Angeles and Sacramento, those paradises on earth, the vine dresser, the florist and the agriculturist ply their peaceful, kindly crafts; healing all abrasions in the soil, terracing rugged slopes, gathering out unsightly stones, and covering everywhere with verdure and billowy beauty. But high up on the sides of the Sierra there is a different work and a different scene. There, it is the miner that has left his record. With his sluice-heads and the tremendous impact of their out-bounding water-spouts he has turned up the mountain sides for miles; turf and flower and rounded mound fly to pieces before him; he strips away the soil from the land; he turns the streams from their own sweet ways of mystery; he disembowels the hills; he decomposes them, throwing up great mounds of boulders and spreading wide expanses of sand in his exploitation of the gold. And he has left behind him, wherever he has trodden, one vast, broken, verdureless scene of desolation and death, which it will take kindly nature centuries to heal, to cure and to cover. One cannot help standing in admiration before this daring and this power of our human nature. Its work on the slopes of the Sierra is, indeed, a mighty work. But, gentlemen, it is a ghastly work.

The instinct of Protestantism is the instinct also of disruption, disintegration and death. Leaping upon Jesus Christ, it hath rent His Body Mystical, the Church, apart from His Body Natural of Palestine, and sent Him, with His Body Natural, into a far-away astronomic heaven. Leaping, then, upon the Body Mystical, the Catholic and Apostolic Church on earth, it hath disconnected Its outward and visible from Its inward part; and, while it lauds its disembodied "Church invisible and spiritual," buries the dead visible part as some offensive thing, fit only to be put out of sight. Leaping upon Christendom, it lacerates it into numerous fighting sects, and, alas, glories in

its disorganizing work, as producing a beautiful and actively writhing variety. Leaping upon the rounded perfect number of the seven Sacraments, it slays five outright, and instantly springing upon each of the other two it tears its soul from its body; Baptism is left without the divine regenerating force of life, the Eucharist is despoiled of its tremendous, adorable Freight, and is left a mere natural and lifeless piece of bread and a memory of the natural man. Leaping upon man as an *immortal* being, it disjoins body from soul, and ignoring the former, appeals only to the latter with "Save your soul; oh, save your soul." But, O Jesus, Thou didst tell us to fear Him who was able to destroy both body and soul in hell. Leaping upon man as a *worshiping* being, it sunders body from soul, and forbids the worship of the body—no fasting, no reverent bending of the head on entering God's presence in God's House, or at the Sacred Names, as little kneeling and as little standing as possible. But, O Jesus, Thou has taught us that the body is a creature of God as well as the soul; and Thou has taught us to worship the Lord our God; and to pray that "both our hearts and bodies may be directed, sanctified, and governed in the ways of this Thy law, and in the works of this Thy commandment." O Jesus, Thou has taught us, too, that we are to worship Thee in spirit and in truth. And how can we worship Thee in truth if our body play not with our spirit in its changing moods of glorious praise, of lowly humility and of reverent adoration; how can we worship Thee in truth if our body belie the moods of the spirit? O Jesus, Thou hast taught us, too, that our body is grafted into Thine; that it is precious to Thee, too, as it is to the very instincts Thou hast planted in us; and that Thou wilt rescue it from death. And Thou hast taught us to pray "that through Thy most mighty protection we may be preserved both here and ever in body and in soul." Nay, cries Protestantism, we have decomposed the man, and the body is dead as a worshiper. Not satisfied with slaying the Body Mystical, it has drawn and quartered the Church; cutting it asunder, not only longitudinally, but also traversely. For it has sundered Church Militant here from Church Expectant and Triumphant there, hurling the beloved departed so far away that the gulf between the living and the dead is bridgeless, that all communication is gone, and neither can give the other the charity of its prayers. O God, upon thy throne, must not even Thine heart have been filled with amazement as to Thy listening ear the voice of Thy needy children's prayers for each other died away into silence! It decomposes the organic Christian creed, and holds out in its hand the poor *dissecta membra* of the once fair flower, that the world may admire its death. It lays hands on the ancient Apostolic three-fold Ministry, slays the Bishop and the Deacon, and at last leaves the world without even a Priest.

While the Anglican rubrics, as all other Catholic rubrics, speak of but one Priest, of but one Celebrant at each Eucharist, and of but one Officiant at each Morning or Evening Prayer, thereby symbolizing the truth that there is but one great Priest, Jesus Christ, and that it is heresy to divide Him (one Celebrant, I say, who may be assisted, indeed, in epistle and gospel, and one Officiant, who may be assisted in the Lessons), it has with its disruptive force, as the foe of unity, invaded our own Church, and sundered the Officiant's and the Celebrant's part of the service into halves, or into more numerous fragments still, and has parceled them out to various Officiants, breaking up even this symbol of the Oneness of Christ. While the rubrics say the services shall be musically rendered, thus securing the unity of the worship as a symbol of the unity of the parish and of the Church, which worships with one voice, it has with its instinct of disruption gone down into our congregations, disintegrated this mode of unison in rendering the service, and separated it into a broken mumble of voices. With boisterous might it has divided religion from æsthetics, and has then proceeded to deprave architecture and to trample ecclesiastical fine arts under its feet. It has debased manners until the "gentleman of the old school" is a phrase descriptive of a culture and a suavity that are well-nigh gone. It has gone down beneath with its bosom to sweep hell away; nay, in its Unitarian form, it has even mounted to the Throne of God Himself, and has there disintegrated and separated Father, Son and Holy Ghost from each other, slain the Holy Ghost, destroyed the Son, and left the Father without a Son, sterile and alone upon His throne.

Behold, then, gentlemen, Catholicity, a life issuing from God; an organizing, centralizing, harmonizing, constructive and beautifying Force! And behold, too, Protestantism, the mother of uncomeliness, a disorganizing, decentralizing, disruptive and destroying power! One cannot but admire its might and its daring. Its work on the slopes of time is indeed a mighty work. But, gentlemen, it is a ghastly work.

The Signs of the Times—Is Christianity Failing?*

A SERMON

PREACHED BY **Henry Ward Beecher**, IN PLYMOUTH CHURCH, BROOKLYN,
MAY 19, 1878.

O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?—Matt. xvi: 3.

THE community to which Christ spoke represented at that time the highest form of religious observance. There was no ground of reproach on account of their fidelity to the institutions and the prevalent doctrines of their national religion. They held to the Scriptures tenaciously. They held fanatically to the Temple. They held to the whole ritual of worship with a grasp which nothing could unclench. There was no occasion, therefore, to reproach them. And yet, there was going on a work of Divine providence which was to destroy the Temple, to supplant the altar, to subvert the ritual, to change the whole exterior economy of their religious life—to change that religious life, however, for the sake of giving it a larger expression, a purer flow, and more power in the individual and in the race. The change was already in the air; the signs of it were about; and yet men who held to the Temple and the whole economy of worship did not discern it; or if they discerned it they condemned it, denounced it, resisted it; and our Saviour laid them under condemnation because, while they were faithful to the statutes and economies of the past, they were not sensitive to what God in His providence was doing all around them. They were bound to understand the signs of the times, and what God meant by changes so marked and so wide. And we, in our time, are liable to precisely the same mistakes which they committed. We are under precisely the same rule of duty which they were under.

There is a growing impression among eminent private thinkers throughout our community that Christianity is losing its hold upon men, and that the Church is a waning power. There is a serious alarm among Christian teachers on this subject. The discourses which are preached concerning doubt and infidelity show this. It has come to be a common thing for men to say that the present is an age of infidelity. We hear much about the decay of faith. Men are attempting to retrace their steps and get back on to old foundations from which unconsciously they have slid.

I think there can be no doubt whatever that there is a universal consciousness of a change, in the air, and all around us.

* We are indebted to the *Christian Union* for the revised report of this sermon.

The extent of it, or the meaning of it, men cannot exactly understand or tell; but that there is a great change men are, I think, everywhere conscious—some to rejoice over it, and some to mourn over it.

Now, no subject is more important than this. There is no knowledge that it so concerns men to have than that which is related to their heart, their conscience and their spiritual condition in the present, and their condition in the life that is to come. It is a very great thing to increase knowledge in every department, to analyze the material universe, to measure the globe, and to find out all its treasures; but, after all, the wisdom that comes from a knowledge of the material universe is small compared with that which concerns the inward nature and destiny of man and mankind.

So, then, the state of the times, and what it augurs, are subjects worthy of the most serious consideration; and I propose, this morning, to enter upon a general view, showing that there is enough in the condition of things to account for the most serious fear of the most serious men; and this evening I propose to enter upon a closer view, and to show that there is enough in the state and condition of things to inspire the hope and confidence of men in the permanence of spiritual Christianity.*

In the first place, and upon a general view, I think there can be no doubt that the drift of educated thought in science, in art and in philosophy is away from church life; and if true religion and church life are identical, then I think it must be admitted that the educated thought of the globe to-day tends away from religion; but I do not think that church life and true religion are so identical.

In New England, in old England, in France, in Germany, in Italy, in educated circles, there has been wrought a very great change in the habits of men's thought, and in their estimate of church life and all its adjuncts. The Church and its ordinances no longer hold the respect and veneration which once were felt in regard to them. That there are hundreds, thousands, millions, who look upon the church with affection, veneration and superstition even, cannot be denied; but that these feelings are passing away from the distinctly educated classes of Christendom I suppose no one who has made himself acquainted with the facts would care to deny.

It is denied that the church is a divine institution in any other sense than that in which an association for education is a divine institution, or in any other sense than that in which any association of men for a worthy purpose in accordance with their nature and with the laws of man is divine. There is a widespread feeling that all the teaching of the past in regard

* This second sermon we shall publish in the July number.

to order and worship which has been claimed to be made known by inspiration is vain. There is a doubt whether a minister is other than simply a man who has fitted himself to be a moral teacher, without bearing any special commission, and without having any transmitted virtue or right laid upon him by authority. There is a doubt whether ordinances are divine in any other sense than that in which everything that is useful is divine. They are useful if they are, and they are not if they are not; and in either case if they serve man they are divine, and if they do not serve man they are not divine; but, in the mechanical way in which it has been held, the idea that there has been laid down the plan of a Church to which all disciples of Christ are obliged to conform; that the government of that Church is definitely prescribed, or that we may by inference determine it; that the general features of public worship are ordered; that the ordinances which belong to the Church are clearly pointed out; that their measure and meaning are unmistakably indicated—this, I say, is being largely doubted; and not only doubted by those who are outside of the Church and are educated thinkers, but doubted just as much by educated thinkers inside of the Church. The rigor of belief in regard to the mechanical form and structure of the Church and of its services is undergoing a very great change everywhere; and this change is manifested by those who protest against it, and who are attempting to screw up the whole machinery of the old system, and who are thus indicating their consciousness of this dissent, as much as by those who utter such dissent in so many words.

There is also among thinkers throughout Christendom a drifting away from formulated religious truth—that is, from theology as a system, or as furnishing a complete, or even a proximate account of God's dealings with the world. Theology, from its very name, would indicate that it is a history of the dealings of God with this globe. So it has been regarded from the earliest days. Take the names of such truly great men as Augustine, Calvin and Turretin in the other land. Look at their systems, not to mention those of many others, covering the whole ground of possible thought at that time. See how the supposed logical connection was maintained from the opening clear down through to the very close; so that at the time when these systems were universally received they seemed to those who held them like a pyramid, tapering steadily, point by point, up to its very apex. Compare the present system of religious thought on the subject of theology with their ideas of systematic theology.

In our own land take the times of Edwards, of Hopkins, of Emmons and of Dwight. To be sure, we have systematic writers to-day of no inconsiderable eminence; but what a con-

trast between the general feeling of Christian men on the subject of systematic theology then and the general feeling on the same subject now! Shall we have another Dante? Shall we have another Milton? Shall we have another Pollock? Shall we have other men who undertake in poetry to give a literary view of God's dealings with mankind? The day for that seems to be past. Men appear to fall away from the very thought as if the thing itself were not possible. A unitary view of the divine government over the whole world has to a certain extent fallen from the conception of possibility. We are moving more and more away from it with our present materials and our present knowledge; for the growth of human knowledge on every side has brought into the consciousness of the Christian world and of thoughtful men in it material for which theology has hitherto had no place and no explanation; and men's thoughts are, in every center of literature and philosophy, busy with things about which there is no account given in any of the great staple systems of theology.

Then, special doctrines in these systems have undergone a very great change since a clearer view has been had of the constitution of man, and of the history of his development in this world. The nature of sin and of penalty, the possibility of reform, the method of reform, its dependence upon the power of the will and upon the scope of thought-power, the relation of material and social circumstances, gradualism, and all its moods—these have come in to change the special doctrines that once were universally received almost without question.

Then again, there has been a wandering, a drifting, an uncertainty among Christian teachers. The sermons that are preached to-day are as unlike the sermons that were preached in my childhood as it is well possible to conceive. The pulpit is changed, showing that it has, consciously or unconsciously, sympathized with the wants of men, and studied those wants in providing that which was to be their food and guidance. It is manifest that the needs of the whole community are not the same as they used to be, in many respects; and that those things which were adapted to the old needs have lost their relative cogency.

I know that all this is answered by saying that man is a sinful being, that he has fallen, that he is to be born again by the spirit of God, that after the new birth is in him through faith he is to live dedicated to God for time and for eternity, that these things are not changed, and that all the rest is surplusage. I do not doubt that it is surplusage to many men who do not trouble themselves about it, and who are content to have the old methods and forms go on as they have gone on in the past; but it does not alter the fact to any sensitive and observing

man that such is not the condition of the great bulk and body of Christian men, of men who believe in the Christian religion, but who nevertheless are preaching so as to show unmistakably that the old methods of statement have lost their power with men, and that they are not yet satisfied as to what shall be the new forms of statement; and the cry is coming up in every direction from sincere and earnest men, "We are losing the power of the old method before we have got the power of any new method." I am neither defending nor condemning this: I am simply stating it as the result of observation and experience.

Besides, a great change has undoubtedly come into the Protestant world on the subject of the Bible, as to the meaning of inspiration, as to what it is and what it is not, with the natural sequences of one or the other theory; as to whether man was simply a channel through which God, as it were, injected into his writing His thoughts; as to whether the inspiration runs through translations as well as through the original; as to whether inspiration was of the age and of the Church; or whether the minds of all men who were in sympathy with God were inspired; as to whether, therefore, the penman did more than to express the average results of the inspiration of the race. These are some of the questions that have arisen. The question of inspiration is not narrow, positive and settled, but is wandering, uncertain, doubtful in the minds of multitudes.

The extent of revelation in the word of God; how much has been revealed there: whether it was needful to reveal a thing which men could find out by the natural process of experience or investigation; whether the elements that limit the reach of man's knowledge have received any light of an important character—these are other questions that have arisen.

The scope and meaning of miracles in connection with the word of God have undergone a most searching investigation; and a vast amount of dissent and variation of opinion exists even in the orthodox Churches on this subject. Opinions differ as to the authority of the declarations of God's word in the presence of a just reason and an authentic moral sense. In other words, it is questioned whether the word of God determines what we shall think, or what our ideas shall be in such a sense as that when any doubt comes up our moral sense shall not be the tribunal which shall interpret the Scripture; whether all Christian teaching does not, in the last estate, come for audience and adjudication before the court of the reasonable moral consciousness in an intelligent age. These are questions that run very deep, and they are very widespread; and, if they do nothing more, they certainly break up the continuity and settledness of feeling that has existed aforetime.

There is a still more profound change going on as respects

the existence and government of a divine Being. Some ten years ago it was that Dr. Bacon, of New Haven, said that the question of our age was not a question of inspiration or no inspiration, but was a question whether there was any God to inspire; he said that the debate was to be as to whether there was a God or no God; and that which was foreseen ten years ago, and twenty years ago, is coming to pass very rapidly. There are multitudes of men who are not ignorant nor malignant, men who profess to have trained their minds to regular and scientific thought, who have absolute atheism as the basis of their belief. That in France, and Germany, and to a limited extent in America, there is a large and growing number of atheists, I think no observing man would care to deny; and they are not beasts, they are not even malignants, they are quiet people, and they have embraced this view for their own sake, without making themselves propagandists.

And even more numerous, I think, are they who belong to the atheistic school that we call Pantheistic, who say that God is a name that includes the whole universe; that it is another name for nerve and brain as they are made manifest in the entire organized creation; that God is the sum of all the facts, attributes and possibilities of all his creatures; and that he is without personality, vague, mysterious, incomprehensible, illusive.

This is a form of infidelity that is especially attractive to mystical, poetic natures. There are some men who can never satisfy themselves in regard to any view whose conclusions do not come to definite, crystalline, exact lines and angles. Then there are some men who are the opposite, and who can never be satisfied with anything that is definite or exact. They want their truth to be like a cloud that opens and shuts, comes and goes, with lights and shades forever changing and opalescent, and to them the idea of a Pantheistic God that cannot be defined or understood is peculiarly attractive. It must be so, or there would not be so many who are thus inclined.

Then there is a Christian Atheism—the Atheism of those who teach the unknowableness of God; who do not deny the existence of a God, who suppose that possibly there may be one, who hope there is one, but who say that whether there is or not we cannot find out, since, if there is, He is absolutely unknowable. There are those who teach this in the pulpit. There are those who teach it outside of the pulpit, and in the scientific forum, declaring that the conditions of divine existence, if there be a God, are such that men cannot understand them, and that all our conceptions of God are fabulous; that they are fictions; that they may have some basis of truth, and that they may be of some use, but that they are not scientific or knowable.

Then there is a large class of people who feel that they are not called to think about these changes and new conditions which they behold, at all; that their business is to fulfill the duties of their station, and not trouble their heads concerning God. They say that if there is a God they will find it out, and that if there is not a God they will be none the worse for not knowing it. The view that they take is that if there be a God He belongs to the other side, and that on this side there is none, so far as man is concerned.

There are, then, several forms of Atheism; and I think the number of their disciples is increasing. And these disciples are not found among the ignorant and vicious: they are found among men of philosophic reputation, men of a great deal of thought, men of real sincerity; and we may as well open our minds to this fact.

Such, then, is the state of things as I understand it. A change is going on with respect to the faith of men in regard to many fundamental points of religious truth, and in regard to the whole system of educatory influences that springs up out of these. It is a change which all sects recognize. The Roman Church discerns it with that clearness of vision which it has had in every age. Protestants recognize it—those who dread it and those who like it. It is admitted in many directions by men who declare that the old things are passed away and that all things are become new.

It is far more diffused among the laity than men suppose. There are hundreds and thousands of men in our Churches who, from one cause or another, listen to sound orthodox preaching every Sunday, for a score of years, and do not believe a word of it. They do not say anything about their unbelief; it is a good thing, they think, to have their children brought up under Church rules and regulations; they have an impression that there is much morality in the pulpit; but as to any philosophy of religion that they hear preached, it goes in at one ear and out at the other. A great many lawyers, physicians, teachers, scientific men sit, for various reasons, under pulpit instructions—some because they feel a want of reverence and worship; some because their social relationships make it convenient for them; some because they are bringing up families, and they think it is a good thing for their children to start in this way, and not blossom out into more perfect knowledge until their habits and characters are formed; and some because it is respectable, fashionable and profitable; but, whatever the cause may be, our Churches are filled with men who are very much at sea in regard to their religious beliefs.

Then, we must bear in mind that there are multitudes of men who think themselves competent to deal with these subjects more ably than they are used to seeing them dealt with.

One of the effects of general education, of the excitability of the brain, the world over, is to bring what have heretofore been regarded as special tribunals of thought within the reach of the masses of men. The pulpit is not any longer the chief instructor. Thousands of magazines, great numbers of periodicals of various kinds, are carrying knowledge out to the people. Once it was said that science dealt only with matter, and not with moral questions; and this was used as an argument defensive of the Bible; but every year science is more and more driving up its tunnel under the foundations of moral questions, of questions relating to the structure of man, the nature of moral sense, the range of thought, responsibility or non-responsibility, and the social relationships that exist among religious men and that serve to influence religious-minded men. All these matters are becoming topics of scientific investigation; and various unbeliefs or relaxation or changes of view are diffused through journals among the people. Our daily and weekly papers are spreading religious thoughts as they did not a hundred years ago. Then men read but few books, for the most part; and it was not reputable to read infidel books. Theological notions were derived from the pulpit, largely; but now the pulpit is only one tribunal among a score; and it is not the most influential one at that.

It is complained everywhere that men are abandoning the Church; that the Church in a majority of instances is thinly attended; and wherever it is thickly attended men explain the fact by saying that it is on account of the fantasies and mountebank attitudes of the preachers. It is taken for granted that men do not want to go to church anymore, and that they do not go when they can help it.

A very notable change has taken place in regard to the publication of religious matter in secular journals. I see present the son of a man who, in my youth, was approached by a clergyman—Rev. Mr. Dickenson—and asked what he would charge for a column or two of his daily newspaper for Saturday mornings to be filled with religious intelligence. Before that time no daily paper had published religious news of any kind. A bargain was made, and Mr Dickenson filled the columns as proposed, paying for them as for advertising columns, and the proprietor and editor agreed that every Saturday morning what he furnished should be published, as published it was. At the end of the first year Mr. Dickenson visited this gentleman to renew the arrangement, when the gentleman said, "I find that my readers like it; and if you will furnish the matter you shall have the space, and I will charge you nothing for it." That was the beginning, in New York, of the publication in secular journals of distinctively religious news; but this feature of journalism has grown so that no respectable daily paper is

now without its religious news. An average *New York Herald* of a Sunday morning contains more real religious news than any weekly religious journal in the United States; and what is true of that paper I suppose is in a measure true of a great many others. I know it is, true of that, because I read it.

The lay thought, therefore, though it is silent, is steadily acting, like a quiet stream which is gradually wearing the banks and changing its course; and although ministers are afraid of it, and preach more and more heartily against it, it still goes on; and men sit and listen, and disbelieve. I have no doubt that there are men in this congregation who do not believe what I say!

What the emphasis of it is, and what its importance is, I will not undertake now to determine; but the fact is to be marked and to be taken into consideration that the great mass of the intelligent community have in such a sense fallen off from the authority of the preacher, and from the influence of the Church, that it is quite possible for them to maintain growing laxity and great changes of belief, and yet not have them appear, unless there is curiosity about such things, and investigation is made.

What a contrast there would be between men's beliefs and the sermons to which they listen if there was a spiritual photographing process by which their thoughts could be taken while they sit under the preaching of our soundest and best men! If when so noble a man as Dr. John Hall is preaching you could just take a photograph of the beliefs of all the hoary-headed men listening to him, or of their thoughts, the contrast would be one of the most extraordinary that was ever known. It is quite possible for men to lay down the soundest doctrinal views, and elaborate them with argument upon argument, and for the outside of a man to listen most respectfully to those views, and to give reverential heed to them, while the inside of him is saying, "May be—may be;" and to say "may be" is as bad as to doubt or to disbelieve. The moment you do not believe, you disbelieve, so far as the moral reformatory power of any truth is concerned.

If a man tells me that a coin which I have is silver, and I think it is silver, I am easy; but if he says to me, "Are you sure that is silver? Are you used to counterfeits? Do you know anything about them? Have you looked into this thing? Do you know that that is all right? I do not say that it is not; it may be all right; but do you know that it is?" I cannot get it out of my mind that there is a doubt about its being a good silver coin until I can ascertain the facts in regard to it. For the time being he has broken my faith in it.

And the moment you have broken the absolute faith of a man in any truth or doctrine so that he doubts it, it has no

power over him. His confidence in it being disturbed, it is incapable of affording him strength, food, raiment or refuge. It is no longer that on which he leans, or by which he lives. It is simply a thing in which he has a half belief and a half unbelief.

This fluctuation of men; this wishing on their part that they knew exactly what is true; this sober and mournful regret that they find themselves sliding away from the old grounds of their fathers and grandfathers; this occasional plucking up of their loins and drawing the girdle tighter that they may keep what they have got—this is all indicative of the change that has gone on, and that is going on.

This change is not narrow, it is not local, it is not transient. It has all the appearances of a march, of an advance, and of an advance as great as that of Judaism over Media and over Assyria; as great as that of Christianity over Judaism; as great as that of Roman Christianity over Roman idolatry; as great as that of the Reformation over the hierarchical system of the mediæval age. If you look at the history of the religious development of the globe, nothing is more marked than that the faiths of men come to be inadequate to their want. A development that at first meets the necessities of men after a time ceases to meet those necessities. At the beginning it is a cradle which they can sleep in while they are yet babes; but it is too short for them to rock in when they become adults. It is sufficient for our childhood, but not for our manhood.

If the skepticism in our times means decadence of faith in man, or in God, or in Christ Jesus, or in His essential teachings; if it means the destruction of the ethical results of Christianity; then it is a murrain and a plague compared to which the plagues of Egypt were so many mercies. But if Christianity has brought the world up to a point in which the old forms are no longer adequate to the new life which is coming out of them; if there is to be an augmentation of individual manhood; if there is to be an elevation of social relationships; if there is to be a larger thought of philosophy; if there is to be a broader statesmanship and world-life; if we are only taking off the old garments and resurrecting the interior spirit and power; if we are merely putting away childish things and entering upon manhood, then no man need be afraid of what shall come.

That God is moving in His providence there can be no doubt; but many men shut their eyes to it; and if our Master were here He would say to them, "Ye can discern the signs of the sky, whether it is red or gray, and tell whether it is going to be fair or whether there is going to be rain; but the signs of the time, ye hypocrites, ye insincere men, ye cannot discern. Because ye hold to institutions instead of vital truths, and ad-

here to mere arrangements instead of fundamental elements, ye cannot discern what God means to do to make men more and larger."

For my own part, I am one of those that do not believe theology is ever going to pass away. I believe that to past theologies we owe a world of gratitude. They were efficient in bearing us through the times that have gone by; and they were good enough for the period in which they existed; but that there is to be nothing more known, that no more light is to break out of the word of God or out of human experience, I do not believe. Any system of theology which is adequate to the wants of mankind must be a system that includes all the facts, all the light and all the truth that from any quarter dawn on the world; and if we are losing our hold upon the older systems, or a part of them, it is only that we are preparing the way to build larger, deeper, with more authority and with more power.

It is to be remarked, still further, that this change, this seeming lapse, is not to be accounted for by saying that it is the result of total depravity. That there are a great many men who love darkness, and who will not come into the light lest their deeds of evil be exposed, cannot be doubted. There is no doubt there is a resistance in the carnal heart to higher forms of truth. There is no doubt that in regard to multitudes of men this is the influencing cause which makes them rejoice in any change which compels old religious truths to let go of them. But, taking the intellectual world, and particularly the religious world, in all the various sects in Christendom, this is not the case. On the other hand, religious men, men who have had settled views on the subject of religion, regard the changes which those views are undergoing regretfully and mournfully. Men are hungry for the truth, and are waiting for it; and many and many persons are more conscientious in not believing than many others are in believing. There are some men who seem to leap for joy when they get rid of an old view, and take on a new view; but it is not so with me. I wish I could—no, I don't; but I sometimes feel as though I wish I could—accept things exactly as I did when I was a boy. The fact is, maintenance of old views has the whole force of religious laziness in it. If I could only get my belief in religion as I got the multiplication table, so that there was no doubt about it; if I could settle every point of doctrine so that I did not have to think about it, and so that it did not disturb me, and so that I felt no responsibility to investigate and discriminate; if I could get rid of all necessity of thought, and all pain arising from uncertainty, and have everything settled, my total depravity would like it immensely. Professor Stuart said that three-fourths of what was called total depravity was laziness. What

everybody wants is ease. That is one of the inducements that are offered for entering that church in which everything is fixed. "Come," men say, "into our church; we have settled everything infallibly; here you will not be troubled by doubts; everything is cut and dried with us; ages have vindicated it; and no thinking is necessary. If you want to know what is true, all you have to do is to go to those who are authorized, and they will tell you." How many affectionate letters I have received urging me to go into that church, and prophesying that I was going into it, and assuring me that there I would have peace, where there was an inspired head who could determine everything absolutely, without any further controversy.

Now, everything in me which belongs to my pre-existent state, according to Darwin, would long for that; but everything in me that is a prophecy of what I am to be when I see Him as He is, and am like Him; everything in me that is as a flame of fire, or as the all-piercing sunlight that ranges, and searches, and develops—all that is discontented with any such absolute fixture as leaves me with nothing to do but to take my packed-up trunk of beliefs and walk through life with it. For God made man an investigating creature. We are to live among the spheres. We are to be as flames shooting hither and thither. We are to be made fit to be thinkers with the divine Thinker, and to be creators under the command of the supreme Creator. We are to go forth, no longer crawling as the serpent, nor flying as the eagle, but darting like beams of light, instantaneous, and every whither.

Upon every man, therefore, is, or should be, laid the responsibility of thinking or deciding; the responsibility of moral investigation and discrimination; the responsibility, not only of ethical conduct, but also of religious belief. As fast as the race are competent to fulfill this responsibility it is incumbent upon them individually. That such is part and parcel of every man's duty is indicated by the Divine plan.

So, when the spirit of out-thinking and out-rising comes in, it is not true that this is the result of malignancy and depravity. It is not the result of malignancy and depravity at all; it is the reverse. It is said that it is irregular; but although it may be irregular, was there ever a movement in this world that was not irregular? Suppose it is like a freshet that carries along with it dead trees, and roots, and all manner of rubbish? Was there ever a movement in this world that did not carry a great amount of rubbish? What if it does tear up the foundations of things here and there? Is it better to have a stagnant pond, or a river that sometimes overflows and undermines its banks? Is it better that there should be life, or that there should be death, in the realm of the spirit?

Meanwhile, the truths of sensibility and the truths of affec-

tion that are received from religious instruction in childhood; the truths that are associated with the venerable father and the sainted mother, and the brothers and sisters beloved; the truths that regulated the heart-beats of youth, in those wonderful days of stillness in New England that we used to know, when the church bell seemed to me like the voice of God, as its notes rolled over the hills and through the valleys; and when, with well-behaved and well-dressed people, we walked to the house of God, and there heard the Divine word taught; and when those strange, wild, mysterious movements called "revivals of religion" took place, and men lived as in a dream, or in a vision—can any man come to my time of life, and find any of those consecrated truths, that carry in them the very essence of his childhood, slipping out of his hands, even if he knows that they are to take on another and a higher form, and not suffer pain?

Is it your child? and is his breath growing shorter and shorter? and are you fading out from his eye? and is his pulse retreating? and is the bell that beats the moments of time striking feebler and feebler? and what if, standing by your side, I say "O mother! your child is called of God, and is going to shake off these cerements of clay, and rise to be an angel in heaven; so rejoice!" Can she rejoice? Her faith may comfort her, and she may say, "I know that"; but she will also say, "This is the child that I have loved and reared; and how can I part with this?" And can a man stand with the husk of an old belief, or with the old form of a belief out of which the life has gone, even if he knows that a better one is coming, and give up the old without groans and pains and sorrows? Change of belief in adult life is not a thing to be reviled. It is not to be spoken of irreverently, as if it were a matter of mere novelty. There have been as many heart-breakings from the recession of men's faiths as from almost any other cause.

This, then, is the condition of facts. I shall speak on the other side to-night. I shall then attempt to show that Christianity is not losing but gaining ground.

Meanwhile, in view of this general statement, it seems plain, first, that God's voice is being heard, in His providence, among us to-day; and it would seem as though the inference should be that we are bound to listen and to consider. We are not at liberty to seclude ourselves in the atmosphere and circle of our little homes, and say, "I am content with what I have got, and what I have hitherto believed." No man that belongs to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ can afford to shut the door when the Lord Jesus is passing by in His providence. And if, in larger proportion and in greater majesty than ever before, He is going

by, woe be to the person who veils his eyes and refuses to behold Him.

There is such a thing as infidelity, but there is also such a thing as idolatry. A man may reject the truth by not accepting it, and a man may lose the truth by holding on to the body that it once had after the life or spirit had gone out of it. There is many and many a man of whose creed it might be said, as the sisters said of Lazarus to Christ, "By this time he stinketh: he hath been dead three days."

Secondly, railing accusations are peculiarly untoward and unwise when there is such a state of feeling as exists in the community. It does not follow because we do not rebuke every change of thought that we are not anxious for the truth. If there are men, and I suppose there are, who believe that they have the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, that they have found out God, that they know everything He has thought in regard to this world that it is necessary for a man to know, I can understand how they may rebuke changes of thought in a Christian spirit; but I cannot understand how men who believe that truth in its nature is crescent, that it comes through a continuous process of development, that it grows in our knowledge and apprehension—I cannot understand how such a man can, when God is going by in His providence, rebuke and cast away those who sympathize with the movement.

Nor can this be remedied by tightening Church forms, by entering into combinations, by holding councils of presbyteries, or by examining men more and more thoroughly. You can examine your candidates for the ministry while they are young and do not know anything, and they will be sound in orthodoxy; but then you get them in as eggs, and they will hatch out as eagles; and what are you going to do? They are in, and you cannot help yourself. There is nothing more preposterous than to undertake to check a movement of thought that is under Divine inspiration, even if it has those inequalities and adulterations which belong to all the works of God in the hands of imperfect men. There is nothing more hopeless or foolish than to attempt to circumvent this change by implements. When a man comes face to face with a living truth which God is making manifest to the hearts and minds of men, whereby a larger interpretation is given to the word of God, how can he prevent the change which it is producing? In the oil region they sink a pump and strike oil, and it flows and flows, then begins to grow less and less, less and less, till at last it is not worth while to work the well. But do they abandon it? No; they get a torpedo, and sink it down, and explode it, and it tears the walls that have become clogged up all around with inspissated matter: and it is well sometimes to put a torpedo under

your orthodox doctrines and split them, that you may get a new flow of life out of them.

Dr. Ewer, of New York, now venerable and always excellent, has informed us that Protestantism is a failure. He is working back toward the old Roman Church, therefore, and is about as wise as I should be if I declared that the whole modern science of navigation was a failure, and that I was going back to Noah's ark to get into that; for it is absurd to attempt to resist, to forestall, to stop a movement which bears in its length and breadth, and height and depth, and in its continuity and universality, the signs and tokens of divine impulse. The attempt to keep back the tide of the sea with a broom, or the attempt to stop the course of a river with a straw, were wisdom compared with the attempt to stop a movement which has behind it the will of God and the universal consciousness of men.

We must attempt to find a larger and deeper expression of the Divine will, instead of running back into the cramped forms of the past. There was a time when the tabernacle was infinitely better than the Egyptian fetich; there was a time when the temple took the place of the tabernacle; but there never was a time when the Jews were tempted to go back from the temple to the tents in the wilderness; and that which they were too wise to do let us not attempt to do, for the Church is better than the temple.

If men, in this growing change, or tendency to change, feel that they themselves are losing force, let them take hold of that which must be the real interior consciousness of every true religion to the end of the world—namely, that God is a Father, and that they are His children; and let them come into personal relations with the living Spirit of all wisdom and goodness. In other words, let them seek not so much the wisdom of books and schools as that wisdom of the Spirit which shall testify that, in their daily life and conduct, they are bringing forth the fruits of God. When they have attained that consciousness, then they need not trouble themselves with the attempt to settle questions which cannot be settled, or which can only be settled in years to come.

One thing is certain—namely, that there is no folly equal to that of cowardice, and that there is no counsellor that is more detrimental to the good of the Church and mankind than fear. To say to one's self, "Do not think, do not listen; shut your eyes; close your ears"—this is spiritual suicide. The salvation of the times consists in believing that in His own way, and by His own method, God lives and acts; that He does not die when men think He does; that He *is*, when men think He is not; and that by the power of His great illumination He brings upon the darkness of the night of men's lives the light

of morning to chase away their fears and dreams; that He has not forsaken the race; but that He has given it that impulse by which it ascends higher and higher, seeking for itself, and for its proper haven. God will not leave His church, nor the men who fear Him and love Him. Mother, your children are not going to be cast out and left without a guide. Father, the foundations of morality are not going to be destroyed. Truth remains; and though its forms may change, it will grow larger and better.

Hope thou in God; do not be afraid of changes when they come; fear not to think with thinkers, and to investigate with investigators, if you do it thoroughly and right; do not shrink from meeting that change which, as I shall attempt to show to-night, means new life; for that which means life in nature does not mean death in religion.